

Bible Class Primers.

EDITED BY
PRINCIPAL SALMOND, D.D. ABERDEEN.

ST PAUL'S ILLUSTRATIONS

CLASSIFIED AND EXPLAINED

BY THE

REV. ROBERT R. RESKER

VICAR OF PURLEY, SURREY

Author of

"Our Lord's Illustrations," "Lessons on the Gospel of St Mark,"

"Bible Scenes and Pictures," etc.

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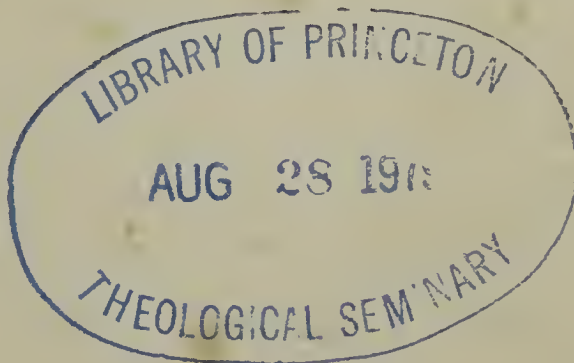
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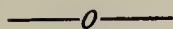
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ST PAUL'S ILLUSTRATIONS.



CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

IT was said by St Chrysostom that "Paul by his letters still lives in the mouths of men throughout the whole world." Although fifteen centuries have passed since the "golden-mouthed" preacher of Constantinople uttered these words, they are as true to-day of the larger world which now exists as they were of the Christendom of the fifth century. Notwithstanding the attempts which have been made to discredit "Pauline theology," there can be little doubt that the writings of the Apostle hold even a higher place and exercise a more powerful influence than ever before.

No doubt the main and primary cause of this influence is the message which St Paul delivered—the gospel, which he felt it would be "woe" to him if he did not preach, and declared to be "the power of God unto salvation." The great subjects of which he treats in his Epistles—the free grace of God, the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ, the place which faith has in individual salvation, and the union of the believer with his Lord—these have been felt to meet man's need, have brought peace into his heart, and have furnished the

strongest motives to righteousness. No wonder St Paul's letters have been and still are so highly treasured.

But may we not add a further reason? Just as our Lord's teaching was full of life and interest owing to its illustrative character, and in consequence appealed so forcibly to His hearers, so also St Paul's utterances arrest attention and stimulate thought by his graphic style, and especially by his frequent employment of figurative language. St Paul, indeed, was a "master of metaphor." There is hardly a chapter in which he does not make clear his meaning to the mind and fix it in the memory by the use of illustrations, gathered for the most part from circumstances or facts with which both he and his readers were familiar. This is the case even when he is setting forth doctrinal truth. It is no bald, abstract statement which he delivers; he presents it for the most part in a graphic form, and illustrates it by metaphor. As an example of this we may note how he illustrates his argument that the Law was a state of tutelage by his reference to the condition of minors (Gal. iv. 1-3).

A study of St Paul's Epistles, as also of his speeches, will indicate from what a wide field he gathered his metaphors. It is indeed only as we collect and arrange them that we realise their frequency and their variety. They reveal to us, moreover, the versatility and many-sidedness of the Apostle, and the wide range of his knowledge and observation.

The late Dean Howson published a small book, now out of print, on the "Metaphors of St Paul,"

in which he suggestively dealt, in his own graphic style, with four groups of images in St Paul's Epistles, and the writer desires to express his indebtedness to it. But, as the Dean himself admitted, these "do not by any means exhaust the characteristic imagery of the Apostle." Apart from the fact that the limits assigned to these chapters do not permit of that elaborate treatment which Dean Howson bestowed upon the metaphors selected by him, the writer might well hesitate to intrude into a sphere which the Dean had made peculiarly his own. But, while taking a more complete view of the subject, his is the humbler yet wider task of arranging and classifying as far as possible all the metaphors contained in St Paul's letters and speeches, offering such brief explanations as space permits.

Without presuming to determine the question of the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews, it has been thought well to include some of the illustrations contained in that Epistle in the survey, when we find kindred metaphors in the Epistles which bear St Paul's name, inasmuch as, whether written by him or not, "it represented the views, and was impregnated by the influence, of the great Apostle."^a

It only remains to add that the texts quoted are taken from the Revised Version, and to express the hope that the ordinary Bible reader, as well as the Bible-class and Sunday-school teacher, may find in this study of St Paul's illustrations what may impart interest to the reading of the one and freshness and point to the teaching of the other.

^a Conybeare and Howson, "Life and Epistles of St Paul," ii. 575.

CHAPTER II.

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM NATURE AND NATURAL
PHENOMENA.

"METAPHORS," says Dr Chase, Bishop of Ely, "play an important part in St Paul's teaching. Few writers venture in reference to the greatest subjects to depend on images drawn from every quarter; few blend metaphors, as does St Paul; few, as he, allow a metaphor to drift on and tide over the barrier which separates one thought from another."^a Many examples of these features will present themselves in the course of our study.

We commence with St Paul's allusions to nature. Dean Howson says that "his metaphors are usually drawn, not from the operations and phenomena of the natural world, but from the activities and the outward manifestations of human life."^b This is manifestly true, and may be accounted for by the fact that the Apostle's chief centres of activity were where men "most do congregate"; but it is surely going too far to say, as Dean Farrar does, "There are few writers who . . . seem to have been less moved by the beauties of the external world"^c than he. St Paul's early life was spent amid "beautiful and impressive scenery"^d; his teacher, Gamaliel, was "celebrated

^a J. H. Chase, Chrysostom, "A Study in the History of Biblical Criticism," 180.

^b Howson, "Metaphors of St Paul," 131.

^c Farrar, "Life and Works of St Paul," i. 18.

for his love of nature.”^a His travels took him over the Mediterranean and through Greece, and the uplands of Asia Minor, and we can hardly think of him as being uninfluenced by the glories of the sea and land through which he journeyed. Naturally he would only illustrate his subjects by allusions within the experience of his readers ; but to assume from the preponderance of metaphors taken from the life of Greek and Roman cities that he was untouched by Nature and its phenomena, is surely to argue from a false premise. Limited, as any one who employs illustrations must be, by the consideration that to be a real help they must be within the compass of the knowledge or experience of those to whom they are addressed, it is no wonder that his favourite and more frequent similes should have been drawn from the sights and sounds of city life. But we have sufficient proofs that he was not indifferent to nature in the following allusions, and especially in those to agricultural life contained in the next chapter.

I. **THE VISIBLE CREATION** is appealed to as witnessing to God’s Being, Omnipotence, and Divinity, as proof that there is personality behind phenomena—

“The invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity” (Rom. i. 20).

Moral evil finds its parallel in the physical evil presented by the world as it now is, whilst the future deliverance from its “groans and pains” is

^a Conybeare and Howson, i. 53.

intimately connected with the future glory of God's children—

“The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God . . . in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now” (Rom. viii. 19-22).

2. THE PHENOMENA OF NATURE. In speaking to the uneducated and pagan peasants of Lystra, St Paul appealed to the *succession of the seasons*, the giving of rain leading to fruitful harvests, as witnesses of the Being and goodness of the “living God”—

“He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness” (Acts xiv. 17).

The sounds of nature, viz., “The voice of many waters,” “The voice of mighty thunderings,” the voice of the wind, the speechless voice of the firmament, and of the endless succession of day and night sending forth “their words to the end of the world” (Ps. xix. 1-4), are referred to as illustrating the gift of tongues, and the need of interpreting those utterances—

“There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and no kind is without signification” (1 Cor. xiv. 10).

Night and day. The darkness of the one and the light of the other have their parallel alike in the soul's experiences, and in the history of the world—

“Ye, brethren, are not in darkness . . . ye are all sons

of light, and sons of the day : . . . so then let us not sleep, as do the rest, but let us watch and be sober" (1 Thess. v. 4-6).

"The night is far spent, and the day is at hand : let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light" (Rom. xiii. 12).

Light finds frequent allusions, both in reference to its creation—dissipating the darkness upon the face of the deep—and its uses ; and becomes a metaphor of his own conversion, and of God's dealings with the souls of men generally—

"Seeing it is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6).

"Ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord : walk as children of light" (Eph. v. 8).

The power of light to change and vivify, as well as to illuminate, finds its parallel in the change which Christ makes in the condition of the sinner—calling him out of darkness, illuminating him so that he becomes light in himself, and also a light to others—

"All things when they are reprov'd are made manifest by the light : for everything that is made manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee" (Eph. v. 13, 14).

The element of *fire*—both as purifying and as consuming—is spoken of more than once as illustrative both of God Himself and of His dealings with men—

"Our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. xii. 29).

“Each man’s work shall be made manifest : for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire ; and the fire itself shall prove each man’s work of what sort it is” (1 Cor. iii. 13).

“In flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God” (2 Thess. i. 8).

The only vengeance which a Christian can take of an enemy is so to act as to turn him into a friend, melting his anger in the fire of love, and producing a burning pang of remorse in his soul. This finds a suitable metaphor in the action of fire—

“In so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head” (Rom. xii. 20).

The *wind*, blowing from several quarters, and driving a storm-tossed ship, now here, now there, as it drifts along, is a picture of the weak and unstable in faith, incapable of self-direction, at the mercy of each influence brought to bear upon him—

“That we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine” (Eph. iv. 14).

3. THE HEAVENLY BODIES. In dealing with the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, the Apostle illustrates the difference between the present and the future body by an allusion to the “celestial bodies,” amongst which there is identity of substance and purpose combined with variety of form and of glory. The sun, the moon, and the stars, though they all give light, differ greatly from each other in size and brilliancy, yet each is suited to its own sphere, and its own function. So will it be with the resurrection bodies of the saints—

“There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead” (1 Cor. xv. 40-42).

The *stars*, appearing with greater definiteness in Eastern skies than in our duller heavens, and giving light upon the earth, are a figure of the Christian seen as shining in a dark world, and seeking to influence it for good—

“Among whom ye are seen as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life” (Phil. ii. 15, 16).

With these metaphors from nature before us—to say nothing of those to be considered in the next chapter—it is almost impossible to agree with Dean Howson in his statement that “there is hardly any mere natural imagery in his Epistles,”^a or with Dean Farrar, that apart from the allusion in Acts xiv. 17, there is not “a single word which shows that Paul had even the smallest susceptibility for the works of nature.”^b

4. **THE ANIMAL KINGDOM** finds but few allusions in St Paul’s utterances, as is only to be expected in one who was specially a man of the city. The flock, oxen, the wolf, the lion are mentioned by him, as will be noted in the chapter on Pastoral Illustrations. Here we may add the allusion to the dog, the unclean pariah dogs of Eastern cities, to whose fierce attacks on those who

^a Howson, “Metaphors of St Paul,” 94.

^b Farrar, “Life and Work of St Paul,” i. 19.

approached their domain, as well as to their impurity, he compares Jewish false teachers—

“Beware of the dogs” (Phil. iii. 2).

The *serpent* is a symbol of the tempter, and his sting of the poison of sin which makes death full of pain—

“I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted” (2 Cor. xi. 3).

“O death, where is thy sting? The sting of death is sin” (1 Cor. xv. 55, 56).

CHAPTER III.

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM AGRICULTURAL AND PASTORAL LIFE.

WE have seen that St Paul drew illustrations from physical nature and its phenomena ; we have now to follow him into agricultural life, where we shall find that he was equally at home. His boyhood spent at Tarsus must have given him ample opportunities of observing the processes of agriculture. For “the Eastern or Flat Cilicia was a rich and extensive plain. Its prolific vegetation is praised both by the earlier and later classical writers ;” and “the rich harvests of corn still grow luxuriantly after the rains in spring. The same tents of goat’s hair are still seen covering the plains in the busy harvest.”^a

^a Conybeare and Howson, vol. i. pp. 23, 52.

The Apostle's habits of observation in those early days were turned to good account in later life, when he sought to trace parallels between natural and spiritual cultivation and growth.

I. HUSBANDRY. Recalling to our minds Isaiah's picture of the Jewish Church as God's Vineyard (Isa. v. 1-7), St Paul compares the Church to Husbandry—

“Ye are God's husbandry” (*Marg.*, R.V., “tilled land”; *Marg.*, A.V., “tillage”) (1 Cor. iii. 9).

Not of human origin or maintenance, as the Corinthians appeared to think when different sections called themselves by the names of the founder or consolidator of their Church, it was *God's* “cultivated land” for the planting and growth of human souls, fitting them by His Divine cultivation, through the Holy Spirit, by the agency of His ministers, and by the operation of His Providential dealings, for life here and hereafter. “If you are God's field,” says Chrysostom, “it is meet that you should take your name not from the husbandmen, but from God. . . . If you are a field, the field must needs be undivided, walled in with one fence, even the fence of concord.”^a

The case of those who have been planted in God's husbandry and then wilfully apostatise has its parallel in nature in land which receives both rain and careful culture and yet proves unfruitful—

“The land which hath drunk the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them for whose sake it is also tilled, receiveth blessing from God : but if it beareth

^a Chase, “Chrysostom,” p. 185.

thorns and thistles, it is rejected and nigh unto a curse; whose end is to be burned" (Heb. vi. 7, 8).

2. **LABOURERS IN THE HUSBANDRY.** As in earthly husbandry the husbandman employed labourers, so the Great Husbandman has His workers—

"We are God's fellow-workers" (1 Cor. iii. 9).

The variety of occupations in agriculture finds its parallel in the "differences of administration" among God's labourers; and the dependence of the former on the rain from heaven for success illustrates the truth that "God giveth the increase" in spiritual results.

Some are "*Planters*"; for "planting in the house of the Lord" (Ps. xcii. 13) must ever be a primary duty of God's labourers, else the husbandry will be as bare as the treeless hills where no saplings are planted to take the place of the felled trees. Others are "*Waterers*," for in lands where there are only season-rains, irrigation was specially needful, and the worker's duty would be to open the sluices to direct the water from the reservoir into all parts of the husbandry. Such was Apollos at Corinth when he helped St Paul's planting to grow by his prayers and labours; but both worked for a common end—

"I planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one" (1 Cor. iii. 6-8).

In intimate relation to planting is the rooting of the trees, which is to find a resemblance in the

stability and life to be derived from union with Christ—

“ To the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong ” (Eph. iii. 17, 18).

“ As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and builded up in Him ” (Col. ii. 6, 7).

(We have here in these references to agriculture and architecture examples of the Apostle’s habit of blending metaphors.)

Others are “ *Sowers*,” scattering the Seed of the Word (illustrating the Evangelistic and Missionary work of the Ministry); some are “ *Ploughers*,” striving to make the ploughshare of truth break up the fallow ground of the hardened heart—

“ He that ploweth ought to plow in hope, . . . If we sowed unto you spiritual things, . . . ” (1 Cor. ix. 10, 11).

As the work of the labourers in the earthly husbandry does not go unrewarded, neither are the services of the spiritual labourers without recompense. There is the *reward of wages*, to enforce which St Paul quotes our Lord’s own words—

“ The labourer is worthy of his hire ” (1 Tim. v. 18).

This reward is in proportion to the work accomplished—

“ Each shall receive his own reward according to his own labour ” (1 Cor. iii. 8).

The wages may be *paid in kind*, and twice we find St Paul quoting a provision of the Mosaic law in reference to this to enforce the duty of supporting the Christian ministry—

“ Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? . . . It is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn. Is it for the oxen that God careth, or saith He it altogether for our sake? Yea, for our sake it was written: because he that ploweth ought to plow in hope, and he that thresheth, to thresh in hope of partaking. If we sowed unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things?” (1 Cor. ix. 7-11 (comp. 1 Tim. v. 17, 18).

“ The husbandman that laboureth must be the first to partake of the fruits ” (2 Tim. ii. 6).

There are other metaphorical allusions to the processes of agriculture, which may be referred to in detail.

3. **SOWING THE SEED.** The provision of the seed for sowing and the fruit that follows come from God, alike in natural and spiritual husbandry—

“ He that supplieth seed to the sower and bread for food, shall supply and multiply your seed for sowing, and increase the fruits of your righteousness ” (2 Cor. ix. 10).

The blessing that follows generous giving finds a parallel in the result of sowing with an open hand—

“ He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. . . . God loveth a cheerful giver ” (2 Cor. ix. 6, 7).

Not only is the Christian worker a sower, but every individual is scattering seed in the acts of daily life, which yields results according to the universal law of “ like producing like ”—

“ God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall

of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life" (Gal. vi. 7, 8).

Seed is not, however, only referred to metaphorically as representing the word of God, and the words and deeds of daily life, but in its being sown; in the mysterious resurrection power contained within it, and in the preservation of its identity under variation of form, it is referred to by the Apostle as analogous to what happens to the body after it is sown in the grave. To answer the question, "How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?" the Apostle replies—

"Thou foolish one, that which thou thyself sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but a bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other kind; but God giveth it a body even as it pleased Him, and to each seed a body of its own. . . . So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body" (1 Cor. xv. 36-38, 42-44).

4. GRAFTING.—The olive tree grows in abundance along the Mediterranean, and St Paul as a boy must often have seen it grafted, the good upon the wild stock. The practice of grafting becomes a metaphor of the calling of the Gentiles, only he reverses the process. "In nature the *good* is always grafted upon the *wild*. In the Church of Christ the contrary process succeeds. The mercy of God is shown by grafting the Gentiles, a *wild* race, contrary to the nature of such operations, into the *good* olive tree of the Church, and causing them

to flourish there, and bring forth fruit into eternal life." ^a

"If thou wast cut out of that which is by nature a wild olive tree, and wast grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which are the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?" (Rom. xi. 24).

5. **FRUIT AND FRUIT-BEARING.** St Paul refers to "fruit" and "fruitfulness" some sixteen times in his Epistles, sometimes to that of the corn-field, sometimes to that of the orchard; and, as Dean Howson points out, when he applies it to moral subjects it is always to what is good. The most prominent of these references may be cited.

The Christian graces inwrought by the Holy Ghost are spoken of as "fruit" in contrast to the dead "works" of the flesh. He catalogues seven of the former and fourteen of the latter, "an evidence," as Archbishop Trench points out, "of man's fallen nature that there is a richer vocabulary of the sins of the flesh than of the operations of regenerate nature" ^b —

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace," etc. (Gal. v. 22).

We have a similar contrast in—

"The fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth . . . the unfruitful works of darkness" (Eph. v. 9, 11).

"What fruit then had ye at that time in the things whereof ye are now ashamed? . . . But now . . . ye have your fruit unto sanctification" (Rom. vi. 21, 22).

^a Tristram, "Nat. Hist. of the Bible," p. 337.

^b Trench, "Synonyms of New Testament."

The Apostle's desire for his converts is that they may be trees laden with fruit—

“That I might have some fruit in you also” (Rom. i. 13).

“Being filled with the fruits of righteousness” (Phil. i. 11).

“I seek for the fruit that increaseth to your account” (Phil. iv. 17).

“Bearing fruit in every good work” (Col. i. 10).

“That they be not unfruitful” (Titus iii. 14).

God's chastisement, like the pruner's knife, leads to fruitfulness—

“Afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness” (Heb. xii. 11).

And the offerings of the Roman Christians for the poor saints, which the Apostle bore to Jerusalem, he regards as the fruit of Christian love—

“When . . . I have . . . sealed to them this fruit . . .” (Rom. xv. 28).

“The appeal” throughout all these references “is to the universal experience of man in husbandry. And if there is just one Jewish touch . . . this is quite what we should expect.”^a That touch we have in the mention of the “*first-fruits*”—

“Ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit” (Rom. viii. 23).

“Abraham was, as it were, the Lord's first-fruits of mankind in the field of the Church,” consecrating the rest to God's purpose^b—

“If the firstfruit is holy, so is the lump” (Rom. xi. 16).

^a Howson, “Metaphors of St Paul,” p. 98.

^b Moule, Expositor's Bible, “Romans,” p. 302.

St Paul's earliest converts were regarded as the pledge of the coming harvest—

“Salute Epænetus my beloved, who is the firstfruits of Asia unto Christ” (Rom. xvi. 5).

“Ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia” (1 Cor. xvi. 15).

And the resurrection of Christ as the Representative of humanity becomes the pledge and pattern of our resurrection—

“But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep. . . . Christ the firstfruits ; then they that are Christ's, at His coming” (1 Cor. xv. 20-23).

6. PASTORAL ALLUSIONS. Reference has already been made to the oxen threshing the corn, to flocks and the milk of the flocks. Arising out of these we may further note the comparison of the Church to a flock and to the danger to which it was liable from open foes—

“Take heed . . . to all the flock. . . . I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock” (Acts xx. 28, 29).

Akin to this is the allusion to the lion, ready to attack the sheep. It is to this ferocious animal that the Apostle likened the Emperor Nero when, on his temporary deliverance, he exclaimed—

“I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion” (2 Tim. iv. 17).

And he who stood by him and delivered him was the Lord, who, in thus guarding His sheep, showed Himself to be—

“The great shepherd of the sheep” (Heb. xiii. 20).

As connected with oxen we may include here a reference to the yoke which united two oxen together in common work. It was probably to Epaphroditus that the Apostle addressed the words, denoting intimate fellowship in the work of the gospel—

“I beseech thee also, true yokefellow” (Phil. iv. 3).

CHAPTER IV.

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM ARCHITECTURE AND BUILDING.

“BE not troubled if illustrations do not avail to present the whole case ; for by their very nature they leave the greater part to the reader’s intelligence.” These words from St Chrysostom are quoted by Dr Chase as showing that he took “an obviously true and sensible view of the scope of teaching by metaphors.”^a We have then always to bear in mind that metaphors only set forth one side of truth or duty. This fact may account for St Paul’s habit of adding one illustration to another, as he sought to present some additional aspect of the subject of which he is treating. We have a striking example of this in 1 Cor. iii. 9 : “Ye are God’s husbandry, God’s building.” Having considered the former we pass now to the latter, viz., the illustrations drawn from architecture and building operations.

^a Chase, “Chrysostom,” 180.

This is one of the Apostle's favourite metaphors, and as we put them together we seem to see the whole edifice brought before us, the foundation, the superstructure, the building operations, and the furniture.

It is specially in his address at Athens and in his Epistles to Corinth and Ephesus (including those to Timothy), that we find these architectural metaphors, and these were cities of magnificent edifices. Athens, although not so glorious in St Paul's days as in earlier times, had its marble temples crowning its hills, and everywhere splendid vestibules, colonnades, altars, theatres, and other public buildings. "How grandly does the Apostle point mentally, if not literally, to the Parthenon and Propylæa and their associated statues on the Acropolis, telling his hearers that God"^a —

"Being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands. . . . We ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man" (Acts xvii. 24, 29).

Corinth, which gave its name to one of the most graceful of columnar forms, lost much of its magnificence when the city was destroyed by fire, B.C. 146; but Julius Cæsar rebuilt it 100 years later with "splendid buildings, enriched with ancient pillars of marble and porphyry, and adorned with gold and silver."^b Ephesus possessed in its Temple of Diana one of the seven wonders of the world. It took 220 years to build, was adorned with 127 columns, each sixty feet in height, and occupied an area

^a Howson, "Metaphors of St Paul," 45.

^b Farrar, "St Paul," i. 555.

about twice the size of St Paul's Cathedral. It was said that "the sun saw nothing in its course more magnificent than Diana's Temple."

Bearing these facts in mind we can readily understand the force with which the Apostle's architectural illustrations would appeal to his hearers and readers "who had glorious architectural works every day before their eyes."^a

I. THE BUILDER first claims our attention. We note that the Apostle applies the figure to God, to the Christian ministry, and to the individual.

God is the builder of all things, of the Christian Church, and of the work of grace in the heart.

"Every house is builded by some one; but He that built all things is God" (Heb. iii. 4).

"Ye are God's . . . building" (I Cor. iii. 9).

"I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up" (Acts xx. 32).

The ministers of Christ also are builders of the spiritual fabric of the Christian Church—

"He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph. iv. 11, 12).

"As a wise masterbuilder I laid a foundation; and another buildeth thereon. But let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon" (I Cor. iii. 10).

But the individual Christian is also represented by the builder; he has to build up his own character—"building up yourselves on your most holy faith" (St Jude 20)—and also thereby, and by his personal influence and labours, the whole

^a Howson, "Metaphors of St Paul," 45.

Church, as we shall see further when we consider the work of building.

“As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and builded up in Him” (Col. ii. 6, 7; comp. Eph. iii. 17).

“Build each other up” (1 Thess. v. 11).

“Let each one of us please his neighbour . . . unto edifying” (Rom. xv. 2).

“Let us follow after things . . . whereby we may edify one another” (Rom. xiv. 19).

2. THE FOUNDATION. As the architect's first care is to see that a secure foundation is laid before the work of building commences, the Apostle, as “a wise masterbuilder,” sees in this a symbol of the first stage in spiritual building, both of the Church and of the individual. The greater the material fabric, the greater is the need for it to have a solid basis to rest upon. The Church must be built upon what will endure, without fear of collapse.

Jesus Christ is the foundation of the Church, as predicted in Isa. xxviii. 16: “Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation.” This stone the Apostle laid at Corinth, as elsewhere, when he “determined not to know anything among (them), save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.”

“As a wise masterbuilder, I laid a foundation . . . other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. iii. 10, 11).

As he and other apostles and New Testament prophets preached the same truth and were themselves builded on this one foundation, in a secondary sense they became “foundation stones,” Jesus

Christ being regarded (as spoken of in Ps. cxviii. 22) as the "head of the corner," "binding together," as Chrysostom remarks, "both the walls and the foundation."

"The household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief corner stone" (Eph. ii. 19, 20).

The permanence and endurance of the Church, like that of a building, is due to its solid foundation. As the wind beats on the former without shaking it, so, although false doctrine may "overthrow the faith of some," the Church remains unmoved.

"Howbeit, the firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His: and, Let everyone that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness" (2 Tim. ii. 19).

In this passage the use of inscriptions on foundation stones becomes a metaphor to describe the relation in which God stands towards, and the character of, those who are stones of the spiritual temple erected on the one foundation.

The proclamation of the Gospel was the laying of the foundation; in a sense, therefore, the work of him who preached it (as we have seen from Eph. ii. 20) becomes a foundation; and although in the case of material structures other men might proceed with the building (even as Apollos built on the Apostle's spiritual foundation at Corinth), yet it was the rule of St Paul not to intrude into another man's sphere of spiritual work, lest he should "glory in another's province" (2 Cor. x. 16).

"Making it my aim so to preach the gospel, not where

Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation" (Rom. xv. 20).

The custom of the wealthy heathen in Ephesus to deposit their treasures with "the great goddess Diana, whose temple was both a sanctuary and a bank," is referred to as an incentive to Christians to deposit theirs with God by "being rich in good works,"^a thereby—

"Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come" (1 Tim. vi. 19).

3. THE SUPERSTRUCTURE. For the foundation is laid with a view to building upon it. Christ is the foundation on which the Christian Church has been reared. With the temples of Corinth and Ephesus in his mind, he speaks of Christians both collectively and individually as "temples," as St Peter speaks of them as "living stones" built into the sacred edifice (1 Pet. ii. 4, 5). "A building is an aggregate thing. And believers are . . . but parts of a building . . . I think we are sometimes too apt to forget this, and to treat Christianity (if I may use the expression) as if it were *monolithic*."^b

The Christian Church is a house or temple :

"Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? . . . The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17).

"In whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit" (Eph. ii. 21, 22).

^a Plummer, Expositor's Bible, "Pastoral Epistles."

^b Howson, "Metaphors of St Paul," p. 55.

Christians are not like loose and separate stones, but are cemented together in the "great house" of the Church (2 Tim. ii. 20), and each member is to labour for the advancement of the whole :

"Since ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may abound unto the edifying of the church" (1 Cor. xiv. 12).

"Unto the building up of the body of Christ"; "Unto the building up of itself in love" (Eph. iv. 12, 16).

The Christian is, however, also as an individual compared to a temple. The Jewish temple containing the shekinah-cloud of God's presence, and heathen temples regarded as the dwelling places of their deities, become illustrations of the believer in whom the Spirit of God dwells :

"Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. iii. 16).

"Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have from God?" (1 Cor. vi. 19).

"We are a temple of the living God; even as God said, I will dwell in them" (2 Cor. vi. 16).

St Paul, having learned the trade of tent making, was familiar with the tents of goats' hair scattered over the harvest fields of Cilicia, and as a Jew was acquainted with the history of the Tabernacle, which gave place to Solomon's Temple; and as the thought of the frailty and transitoriness of man's body is pressed upon him, perhaps by his own sufferings, and he looks onward to the future resurrection body, he compares the former to a tent and the latter to a permanent building :

"We know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made

with hands, eternal, in the heavens. For verily in this we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven (2 Cor. v. 1, 2).

4. THE ERECTION OF THE SUPERSTRUCTURE. While we speak of buildings as "edifices," we have limited the verb "to edify" to moral and spiritual instruction and improvement, but we need to remember its original suggestion of building. As we have already seen, all, both ministers and people, are to seek to build up both the Church and their own spiritual lives :

"Seek that ye may abound unto the edifying of the church" (1 Cor. xiv. 12).

"Let all things be done unto edifying" (1 Cor. xiv. 26).

"All things, beloved, are for your edifying" (2 Cor. xii. 19).

"Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth" (1 Cor. viii. 1).

"Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying" (Eph. iv. 29).

As the builder would reject unsuitable material, so things which edify not are to be avoided :

"All things are lawful, but all things edify not" (1 Cor. x. 23).

The Apostle's authority was given to him for the building up of the Church :

"Our authority (which the Lord gave for building you up, and not for casting you down)" (2 Cor. x. 8 ; xiii. 10).

"If I build up again those things which I destroyed, I prove myself a transgressor" (Gal. ii. 18).

5. DIFFERENT STRUCTURES ON THE FOUNDATION. After speaking of the foundation

which he had laid at Corinth, and of another (*i.e.* Apollos) building thereon, he proceeds to say :

“ Let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon ” (1 Cor. iii. 10).

And he then describes two kinds of structures resting on the same foundation. In his mind's eye was a stately edifice of costly stones and marble columns richly decorated with gold and silver ; and nestling against its walls, and almost under its very eaves, were some wretched hovels of wood and wattle, with thatched roofs, and the chinks of the buildings filled in with hay or straw.^a Then there comes a fire—such as that which destroyed Corinth, B.C. 146— which burns up the flimsy structures, the dwellers in them barely escaping through the flames, but leaves the richly decorated, stately granite and marble edifice scorched perhaps, but unconsumed.

The building of “ gold, silver, costly stones ” is a metaphor of a Christian character and life built on the foundation of a true faith, of materials which will stand the test of fire—a holy life in which all the Christian virtues in symmetry and proportion are apparent—the builder of which shall be rewarded. But the miserable hovels, though on the same foundation, are the weak, inconsistent, powerless characters, the builders of which, when the fiery test is applied, shall be “ scarcely saved ” (1 Pet. iv. 18) :

“ If any man buildeth on the foundation gold, silver, costly

^a Egyptian travellers describe the Temple of Luxor as having been half concealed from view by the mud houses of the natives which had been built within and upon it until recent years, when all but a mosque have been removed.

stones, wood, hay, stubble ; each man's work shall be made manifest : for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire ; and the fire itself shall prove each man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work shall abide which he built thereon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss : but he himself shall be saved ; yet so as through fire" (1 Cor. iii. 12-15).

Such material edifices as are to stand the test need a skilful architect who is "able to build them up" of good and lasting materials ; and the Apostle tells the Ephesian elders, as we have already noted, of One who was able to "edify" spiritual structures of which these were metaphors :

"And now I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up" (Acts xx. 32).

6. PARTS OF THE BUILDING. The *door* is a metaphor of the opportunity which opened to the Apostle for preaching the gospel at Ephesus and Troas, and of that which he desired might be given to him in Rome (including probably the opening of his prison door) :

"I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost ; for a great door and effectual is opened unto me" (1 Cor. xvi. 8, 9).

"When I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ, and when a door was opened unto me in the Lord . . ." (2 Cor. ii. 12).

"Praying for us also, that God may open unto us a door for the word" (Col. iv. 3).

Dean Howson remarks that it is "from classical architecture that St Paul draws his metaphors of this class" ; and that "all conspicuous Greek buildings, and most of the conspicuous Roman buildings of his time, were characterised by vertical columns,

supporting a horizontal entablature.”^a And, while we bear in mind that St Paul, as a Jew, must have been acquainted with the description of Solomon’s Temple, with its two porch-pillars, called “Jachin” and “Boaz” (1 Kings vii. 21) he had also seen with his own eyes the Corinthian pillars supporting the roofs of the cloisters in Herod’s Temple,^b which was of classical architecture. These *pillars* became a metaphor both of the Church itself and of the leading apostles and supporters of the Church in Jerusalem :

“The house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. iii. 15).

“James and Cephas and John, they who were reputed to be pillars” (Gal. ii. 9).

The wall of partition in the Temple of Jerusalem—a low balustrade between the court of the Gentiles and that of the women, on which Josephus states^c there were stone tablets with inscriptions in Greek and Latin threatening death to any foreigner who went within (one of which was discovered by M. Clermont Ganneau in 1871)—furnishes the Apostle with a striking illustration of the barrier between Jews and Gentiles, which our Lord destroyed. The fact that St Paul’s imprisonment was caused by the surmise that he had taken the Greek Trophimus, an Ephesian, within this enclosure gives point to the allusion when writing to the Ephesians from his Roman Prison :

“In Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who made both

^a Howson, “Metaphors of St Paul,” 73, 75.

^b Josephus, “Ant.” xv. 11, 5.

^c Josephus, “Wars,” v. 5, 2.

one, and brake down the middle wall of partition" (Eph. ii. 13, 14).

7. **FURNITURE OF THE HOUSE.** In a passage which has been already quoted, St Paul combines the metaphors of the foundation, the house, and its furniture, where the "foundation" indicates the Church in its intrinsic and purely spiritual aspect standing firm against the winds of false doctrine—"The firm foundation of God standeth" (2 Tim. ii. 19). The metaphor then glides into that of a "great house"—the Church, viewed in its external and mixed character, as in our Lord's parables of the Wheat and Tares and the Drag-Net. As a house has its vessels of service, made of good and base material, according to the purpose for which they are designed, so, "in the visible Church the evil (is) ever mingled with the good." There are, however, "gradations in each class, gold and silver in the one, wood and earth in the other, not all among the good equally good, nor all among the bad equally bad. A great house has a vast variety of furniture."^a But there are two great classes: "Vessels unto honour" and "Vessels unto dishonour."

Among the "vessels unto honour" we may think of the golden cup for the master's table on high festivals; the silver drinking vessel for daily use, or for a draught of water to refresh the passing traveller; the gold or silver bowl to hold sweet-scented flowers or rose leaves, which send their odour over the house. These we may think of as bearing marks, certifying to the purity of the precious

^a Howson, "Metaphors," 68.

metal and to their ownership: they are "dedicated" to his special service, "meet" for his use, "prepared and ready" for their respective purposes. The Apostle sees in them a parable of the true and useful members of the Church, purified in heart and life, possessing the "hall-marks" of being (1) dedicated and hallowed (like the vessels of the Jewish Temple); (2) "Serviceable to the master" (the Greek word is only used elsewhere in the New Testament of Onesimus (Philem. 11) and Mark (2 Tim. iv. 11) both of whom had previously been "unprofitable"); and (3) "Prepared and ready unto every good work"—prepared alike by God's grace (see Eph. ii. 10), and by prayer and the use of the means of grace, and therefore made ready.

The "vessels unto dishonour" include those made of wood and earthenware, base and perishable materials, such as the earthen bowl or the wooden pail, intended for the common and meaner work of the house. These symbolise both the false teachers and the evil livers among the members of the Church—those who fall short of their high calling as vessels of the house, who live for self and the world.

The contrast is not between superiority and inferiority, but between what is reputable (used for purposes of dignity, refinement, and beauty), and what is degraded (used for meaner, baser purposes). Both belonged to the house; but they were not mingled: the vessels of the guest chamber and banqueting-hall were kept aloof from those of the offices of the house. In this fact, the Apostle sees a practical lesson: "If a man purge himself" from

the baser members—not cast them out, for as Chrysostom strikingly, if not quite accurately, says, “Paul was earthen and became golden; Judas was golden and became earthen,” but keeping himself from intimate friendship and association with them,—then he shall be a “vessel unto honour”:

“In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some unto honour, and some unto dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, meet for the master’s use, prepared unto every good work” (2 Tim. ii. 20, 21).

The vessels unto honour and unto dishonour are once again referred to by St Paul, but with a significant change: both are of the same original material—clay, in the hands of the Potter, who makes one for honour, and another for dishonour. Here “we have the two classes set before us; the sure tendency of the one to destruction, unless there is a recovery; the great truth that the glorious condition of the other is due to God only. All else is left open and untouched. The language is not so much argumentative as illustrative. It is of great importance, in the interpretation of Scriptures, not to press a metaphor beyond the point which it was intended to eliminate, and not to deal with allegory as though it were logic.”^a “The sternly simple illustration, in itself one of the least believed utterances in the whole Scriptures—that dread Potter and his kneaded Clay—gives way, in its application, to a statement of the work of God in man full of significance in its variation. Here are

^a Howson, “Metaphors,” p. 70.

indeed 'vessels' still, and the vessels 'for honour' are such because of 'mercy,' and His own hand has 'prepared them for glory.' And there are the vessels 'for dishonour,' and in a sense of awful mystery they are such because of 'wrath.' But the 'wrath' of the Holy One can fall only upon demerit; so these 'vessels' have merited His displeasure of themselves. And they are 'prepared for ruin'; but where is any mention of *His* hand preparing them? And meanwhile He 'bears them in much long suffering.'"^a

"Hath not the potter a right over the clay, from the same lump to make one part a vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much long suffering vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction; and that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He afore prepared unto glory" (Rom. ix. 21-23).

CHAPTER V.

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM MILITARY LIFE.

"ANOTHER fruitful source from which the Apostle derives his allusions are the armaments of war. The Jews, who were exempted from serving in the Roman armies, took little interest in the military art; but Paul, as a tent-maker, was directly connected with it, and he was often in scenes where the clank of the cuirass and the sound of the bugle would be daily ringing in his ears."^b

^a Moule, Expositor's Bible, "Romans," 254.

^b Lewin, "Life and Epistles of St Paul," ii. 974.

For, as Dean Howson, points out,^a we have to bear in mind "how large a portion of his time St Paul spent in the close proximity of soldiers. He lived under the shadow of the greatest military monarchy which the world has seen. . . . In Philippi, in Troas, and the Pisidian Antioch, which were Roman colonies, we may well believe that the warlike symbols of Rome were more prominent than in other cities which he visited ; and the state of Syria, which was a very uneasy province, and was held by a standing army of 60,000 men, was very different from that of Achaia and Bithynia, which were comparatively quiet and settled districts. But wherever he resided military uniforms and military quarters were familiar objects." But he had a closer and peculiarly intimate acquaintance with Roman soldiers from the time of his rescue in the Temple by the garrison of Antonia to the close of his life. He was taken by night to Antipatris "under the charge of a guard almost as numerous as half an English regiment, besides a squadron of dragoons" ; he spent two years in the garrison town of Cæsarea ; he journeyed to Rome under the charge of the centurion Julius, of the Augustan cohort (Acts xxvii. 1) ; for two years he dwelt in his own lodgings in Rome in charge of a soldier who guarded him ; and when from his prison he wrote his various epistles, it was doubtless in the presence of a Roman guard to whom he was chained. This would give point to his description of himself as "an ambassador in chains" (Eph. vi. 20), and to the allusion to his chain, the weight of which made

^a Howson, "Metaphors," 5-8.

itself felt when he appended his name to a letter (Col. iv. 18).

It was no wonder that his thoughtful mind should, in his constant opportunities for observation and reflection, draw parallels between the Roman soldier and the Christian, which we now proceed to classify under the divisions of the Soldier, his Warfare, Foes, Armour, Pay, Victory and Reward.

I. THE SOLDIER. That St Paul regarded the Christian life as "a battle, not a hymn," is abundantly clear; and the Church claims the baptised as soldiers pledged "manfully to fight under Christ's banner against sin, the world, and the devil."

It is, however, to the *soldier on active service* that the Christian is compared, not to the soldier on parade: he is called to go on campaign. The Roman armies were constantly on the march, along those famous military roads which radiated from Rome to the conquered lands which made up the empire. Legions were stationed in every subject country in order to maintain peace and to put down those outbreaks which occurred from time to time. This involved long and forced marches, the endurance of hardships, short rations, and rough quarters. It also necessarily included abstention from the affairs of ordinary life, whether domestic or political, the interests of which were incompatible with a soldier's duties. Moreover, the soldier's main purpose would be to please the commander by whom he had been enrolled (perhaps in a legion raised by himself) by prompt obedience and devotion to duty. These three aspects of the life of a

soldier on campaign are to be reproduced in the Christian soldier.

“Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier on service entangleth himself in the affairs of this life; that he may please him who enrolled him as a soldier” (2 Tim. ii. 3, 4).

2. THE SOLDIER'S WARFARE. In the position of the Roman legions stationed in a hostile country and ever liable to attack, the Apostle sees a picture of the Christian in the world, exposed to attack, by foes of his liege lord and of himself; and as the trumpet rang out its summons to the conflict, so he sounds to *Call to Arms*.

“The night is far spent, and the day is at hand; let us therefore . . . put on the armour of light” (Rom. xiii. 12).

“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong” (1 Cor. xvi. 13).

“Be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the whole armour of God” (Eph. vi. 10, 11).

The *Trumpet Call*, with its recognised signals, must be as definite in the spiritual as in the physical strife.

“For if the trumpet give an uncertain voice, who shall prepare himself for war?” (1 Cor. xiv. 8).

The Thessalonians are commended for the clear trumpet call which they had sent forth.

“For from you hath sounded forth [as a trumpet] the word of the Lord” (1 Thess. i. 8).

And in the final contest the “trump of God” which will awake the dead is compared to the trumpet which arouses the sleeping army.

“The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, . . . and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first” (1 Thess. iv. 16).

“For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible” (1 Cor. xv. 52).

The Christian conflict itself is a *real warfare*.

“Without were fightings” (2 Cor. vii. 5).

“I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity” (Rom. vii. 23).

3. THE SOLDIER'S FOES. Both contrasts and analogies are employed by St Paul when he refers to the Christian soldier's foes. There is the contrast between the visible serried ranks of an earthly army and the invisible because spiritual forces arrayed against the Christian. But although spiritual, these foes were not to be under-estimated; an unseen foe, indeed, is more to be feared than one that is visible, inasmuch as the strength of the latter can be estimated.

“Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph. vi. 12).

There is, however, an analogy in the *tactics of war*. The Apostle sees in the stratagems employed by soldiers—making a feint attack in this direction while the real attack was in another where least expected, lying in ambush, &c.—a metaphor of the tempter's attacks, of which the temptation of Eve is an example.

“The woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression” (1 Tim. ii. 14).

“The wiles of the devil” (Eph. vi. 11).

“The snare of the devil” (2 Tim. ii. 26).

“That no advantage may be gained over us by Satan: for we are not ignorant of his devices” (2 Cor. ii. 11).

4. THE SOLDIER'S ARMOUR AND WEAPONS.

—St Paul, as we have seen, had ample opportunities of observing the Roman soldier's armour, and doubtless often saw him put it on. And the girding itself, no less than the separate parts of his military equipment, becomes a parable. There was protection for every part of the body, and there was one weapon of offence; and this “panoply” is a figure of the complete provision made by God for His soldiers.

“Take up the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all to stand” (Eph. vi. 13).

Thinking of the armour as a whole he calls it “*the armour of light*.” “I fancy,” says Dean Howson, “St Paul . . . writing far through the night to the Christians in Rome, and just at day-break, when the sentinels are changing guard, and the morning light glances on their armour—while at the same time the last sounds of debauched revellers in the street fall upon his ear—expressing himself in the now familiar words”:^a

“The night is far spent, and the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day,” etc. (Rom. xiii. 12, 13).

The Christian belongs to the army of Him Who is “the Light of the world,” and Whose kingdom is

^a Howson, “Metaphors,” 10.

a kingdom of righteousness : hence the equivalent expression "the armour of righteousness," both offensive and defensive, represented by the sword in one hand and the shield in the other ;

"By the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left" (2 Cor. vi. 7).

So the Apostle emphasises the truth that the Christian's weapons are spiritual, as befits a spiritual conflict, confirming thereby our Lord's words, "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (St Matt. xxvi. 52) :

"For though we walk in the flesh we do not war according to the flesh (for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strong holds)" (2 Cor. x. 3, 4).

St Paul also particularises the soldier's equipment, in his first letter specifying only two :

"Putting on the breastplate of faith and love ; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation" (1 Thess. v. 8.)

But the full catalogue of the Roman soldier's armour is given in the epistle to the Ephesians, written when "he was in the midst of the Prætorian Guards, the *élite* of the Roman army, a body of men raised far more conspicuously above the legions than our own Guards are, or even the French Imperial Guard were, above the regiments of the line. But not only was he in the midst of them, seeing them continually, and hearing daily all the sounds of barrack life, but he was fastened to one of these guardsmen while he dictated the letter, and he felt the chain on his

wrist while he affixed his signature.”^a The order in which he names the several pieces of armour is that in which he had seen them put them on.

The *girdle* comes first—a strong leathern belt with metal plates, which not only covered the waist and loins but also braced the whole body and the rest of his equipment together. “It was to the Roman soldier what Truth is to the soldier of Christ.”^b It indicates a firm grip of Him Who is “the Truth” and a definite conviction of “truth as it is in Jesus” (Eph. iv. 21), which alone will enable the Christian to stand firm :

“Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth” (Eph. vi. 14).

The *breastplate* or *cuirass*, made sometimes of prepared leather or quilted cloths, with appendages at the bottom and shoulders, but later with a breast and back-piece of steel, somewhat in the form of the cuirass of our Horse Guards. It protected the heart and vital organs. It indicated righteousness of character and conduct, starting from having “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” as righteousness, but exhibited in a state of being right with God in the heart and in the life :

“And having put on the breastplate of righteousness” (Eph. vi. 14).

The *sandals*, studded with hobnails, which enabled Roman armies to march to the conquest of the world (as some marched from Britain to take part in Titus’ siege of Jerusalem), find their

^a Howson, “Metaphors,” 21.

^b *Ibid.* 23.

parallel in a state of preparation and readiness to do God's will. "The Roman soldiers were all on the alert in obeying orders to carry into every nation the miseries of *war*. The like alacrity ought to be shown by us in our obedience to our Captain; and no slip-shod indolence ought to make us slow in moving on this happy errand of *peace*":^a

"Having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace" (Eph. vi. 15).

The *shield*—the large oblong shield, about 4 feet by 2½ feet, usually made of wood, covered with leather, protecting the whole body and supplying whatever deficiencies there might be in other parts of the armour—is a symbol of faith—faith which is "the victory that hath overcome the world" (1 John v. 4), quenching the devil's temptations even as the shield intercepted the fire-tipped darts or arrows of the earthly foe:

"Withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one" (Eph. vi. 16).

In the *helmet*—the most conspicuous part of the soldier's equipment, "covering his head in the day of battle" (Ps. cxl. 7), and by its brightness claiming attention—we may see "a representation of that cheerful and courageous hope which is so important an element in the Christians' warfare, and so bright an ornament and crowning point to all the other graces of his character."^b Perhaps, as covering the head, it may specially indicate the

^a Howson, "Metaphors," 27.

^b *Ibid.* 26.

hope that protects against intellectual difficulties, and silences all the doubts of the mind :

“For a helmet, the hope of salvation” (1 Thess. v. 8).

“Take the helmet of salvation” (Eph. vi. 17).

So far we have protective armour, an equipment of defence. But there is one weapon of offence, not the Roman pike, but the two-edged sword. The former is perhaps purposely omitted, and the latter is described as “of the Spirit . . . the word of God,” which the Holy Spirit has provided in the Holy Scriptures which he inspired holy men to write (2 Pet. i. 21), a weapon which is indeed “sharper than any two-edged sword” (Heb. iv. 12). We have to fight, not with man but with sin, and our weapon is a spiritual one—God’s truth, revealed in Scripture and summed up in the creeds, which, when the old knights recited they drew their swords to show their readiness to defend. This sword our Lord used so effectively in the wilderness :

“The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God” (Eph. vi. 17).

5. **THE PAY OF THE ROMAN SOLDIER** is also employed as an illustration by the Apostle, first when he sets forth the duty of the Church to support its Ministers,—using the word which was applied to the rations in kind which at first formed his “Pay”—

“What soldier ever serveth at his own charges?” (1 Cor. ix. 7).

“I robbed other Churches, taking wages of them that I might minister unto you” (2 Cor. xi. 8).

Again, when he uses the metaphor to denote the

results of sin—"Sin's military stipend, punctually given to the being which has joined its war against the will of God"—^a

"For the wages of sin is death" (Rom. vi. 23.)

6. THE SOLDIER'S VICTORY AND REWARD.

The sense of duty alone is sufficient to prompt devotion, yet the thought of victory and reward is an additional stimulus: and St Paul draws a parallel between the earthly and the Christian soldier in this respect also. Not every army is victorious; yet there have been generals who have never lost a battle. Such inspired confidence. The "Captain of our Salvation" has conquered His foes, and He promises *victory* to His faithful soldiers:

"In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Rom. viii. 37).

"O death, where is thy victory? . . . Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. xv. 55, 57).

The vigorous prosecution of a campaign, with allusions to rock forts, the capture of prisoners, and the crushing out of rebellion, is a graphic picture of the triumphs of the Gospel:

"The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strong holds; casting down . . . every high thing . . . and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ," etc. (2 Cor. x. 4, 5).

The *reward* of the Roman soldier when he returned victorious and was welcomed by incense, garlands, and acclamations, as the triumphal procession, with captives and trophies, went along

^a Moule, Expositor's Bible, "Romans," 178.

the *Via Sacra* to the capitol, scattering largesses to the people, finds its parallel in Christ's triumphal entry into heaven, and the conquest of the Gospel :

“Thanks be unto God which always leadeth us in triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest through us the savour of His knowledge in every place” (2 Cor. ii. 14).

“Having put off from Himself the principalities and the powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Col. ii. 15).

Meanwhile the strength and safety of the Christian exposed to danger lies in being kept by the military guard of the peace of God in the heart, just as “Roman garrisons in frontier towns guarded them from attacks of enemies, and enabled the inhabitants to carry on in peace their daily work” : ^a

“The peace of God . . . shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus” (Phil. iv. 7).

CHAPTER VI.

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM GREEK GAMES.

ST Paul “was a man of extensive and accurate observation. All the objects of the surrounding world as they passed in review before him were faithfully transmitted to the mind, and from this overflowing storehouse the most pleasing images were ever and anon transferred to his writings. What connection had Paul as a Jew or a Christian with the Pagan games? Yet how frequently and forcibly does he draw his illustrations from this

^a J. A. Beet, on “Philippians,” iv. 7.

source. Early impressions are ever the strongest, and one is apt to think that athletic exercises were intertwined with his childhood. Tarsus had its gymnasium on the banks of the Cydnus; and only a few years before the birth of Paul, Marc Antony . . . had given them a Gymnasiarch, or Master of Games, at the expense of the Roman exchequer. Here the young Hellenist may have witnessed, with the intensity of delight which only boyhood can feel, the wrestlings and races to which he so graphically refers."^a

As we study these frequent allusions we seem to have the whole scene from the preliminary training to the bestowal of the prize, brought before us; and we can form some idea of the interest which these illustrations would create in the minds of those who were familiar with them, when we recall the fact that these contests were regarded by the youth of Greece with, I suppose, as much keenness as is the University Boat race among ourselves.

We may classify St Paul's references to Greek games under the headings of the Gymnasium, the Stadium, and the Goal.

I. ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE GYMNASIUM.

An old writer tells us something about the *preliminary training*. "You wish," he says, "to conquer at the Olympic Games? So also do I: for it is honourable; but methink yourself what this attempt implies, and then begin the undertaking. You must subject yourself to a determinate course; must submit yourself to dietetic discipline; must pursue the established exercises at fixed hours in

^a Lewin, "Life and Epistles of St Paul," ii. 971.

that cold; must abstain from pleasure; yield yourself unreservedly to the control of the president or trainer as to a physician, and then go into the struggle."^a

No wonder the Apostle saw in all this a striking picture of the Christian life. It is a training for eternity, to fit him to enter upon his reward. The self-restraint of the athlete in training is to be copied by the Christian :

“Every man that striveth in the games is temperate in all things” (1 Cor. ix. 25).

“If also a man contend in the games, he is not crowned, except he have contended lawfully” (2 Tim. ii. 5).

That is, “he cannot obtain the prize unless he complies with the regulations; and these included, among other things, very strict and systematic methods of discipline and training.”^b

St Paul did not disparage this bodily training, but he says that if the athlete was willing to undergo the discipline of the gymnasium, for a temporal advantage, much more should the Christian be ready to endure hardness with the future life in view :

“Exercise thyself unto godliness: for bodily exercise is profitable for a little; but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come” (1 Tim. iv. 7, 8).

2. ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE STADIUM.
Every Greek city of any size had its amphitheatre or stadium. It was by the erection of a Greek

^a Epictetus, “Enchiridion,” ch. 29 (quoted in art. “Games,” Kitto’s Cyc. of Bib. Lit.).

^b Howson, “Metaphors,” 157.

stadium at Jerusalem that Herod incurred the opprobrium of the Jews. The stadium was usually oblong; that at Olympia was about 600 feet in length, with a semi-circular end, and tiers of seats rose one above another. Here the foot races, wrestling, boxing, and other feats of skill took place; and the Romans added contests with wild beasts. Into the arena those who had qualified were summoned by a herald, to whom St Paul compares himself:

“After I have preached to others” (*i.e.* “having called others, as a herald, into the race”) (1 Cor. ix. 27).

The *racecourse*, in the Apostle’s mind, becomes a picture of man’s life; as, indeed, we speak of the “course of life”; but it differs from the stadium in that its length is unknown to the racer.

“As John was fulfilling his course” (Acts xiii. 25).

“That I may accomplish my course” (Acts xx. 24).

“I have finished the course” (2 Tim. iv. 7).

The *runner* casting off all unnecessary clothing, lest it should impede his progress, is to find his parallel in the Christian:

“Lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us” (Heb. xii. 1).

The *race itself* is regarded by the Apostle as indicating what the Christian life should be. It is unfortunate, perhaps, that the word “fight” should rather suggest the idea of warfare; “but,” as Howson points out, “this term has nothing to do with war. It denotes an *athletic* contest, and the particular kind of athletic contest . . . is the foot

race."^a The word employed by him is the same as our Lord used when He said, "*Strive* to enter in by the narrow door" (St Luke xiii. 24).

"Fight the good fight of the faith" (1 Tim. vi. 12).

"I have fought the good fight" (2 Tim. iv. 7).

The activity and progress which should mark the Christian life are well indicated by the runner :

"So then it is not of him . . . that runneth," etc. (Rom. ix. 16).

"Lest by any means I should be running, or had run, in vain" (Gal. ii. 2).

"Ye were running well; who did hinder you?" (Gal v. 7).

"That I may have whereof to glory . . . that I did not run in vain" (Phil. ii. 16).

"Let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Heb. xii. 1).

The earnestness of purpose and definiteness of aim which he had seen in the Greek athletes he had carried out in his life as a Christian, and he holds them up for the imitation of his converts. Photographed, as it were, on his memory was the picture of the racer; and as he depicts it we seem to see him, head and shoulders forward, his eyes fixed on the winning post, concentrating his whole energy on the contest. No doubt the thought of some other racer outrunning him led him to exert himself to the utmost. But although there is no competition in the Christian race, there must be equal earnestness of effort.

"Know ye not that they that run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? Even so run, that you may attain. . . . I therefore so run, as not uncertainly" (1 Cor. ix. 24, 26).

^a Howson, "Metaphors," 140.

“But one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize” (Phil. iii. 13, 14).

The *pugilistic encounter*, which took place in the arena, as well as the *fight with wild beasts*, illustrate some of the experiences of the Apostle :

“So fight (‘box,’ *marg.*) I, as not beating the air . . . but I buffet (‘bruise,’ *marg.*) my body, and bring it into bondage” (1 Cor. ix. 26, 27).

“If after the manner of men I fought with beasts at Ephesus, what doth it profit me?” (1 Cor. xv. 32).

“I think God hath set forth us the Apostles last of all, as men doomed to death ; for we are made a spectacle unto the world” (1 Cor. iv. 9).

The *spectators* who filled the tiers of seats, and gazed with the deepest interest on the competitors (some of them doubtless friends), cheering them on by their plaudits, are taken by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews to represent the “heroes of faith” who have passed into the heavens :

“Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses,” etc. (Heb. xii. 1).

3. ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE GOAL. The *goal* itself suggests many striking illustrations to the Apostle. “A low wall, called the *spina*, extended lengthways down the centre of the area, and around this wall the races were run. At each extremity of the wall stood three wooden pillars or goals. . . . Appropriate mottoes were inscribed on the pillars. Upon one, ‘Make haste!’ upon another, ‘Be brave!’ on a third, ‘Turn!’”^a On a

^a Kitchin, “Scripture Teaching Illustrated,” 219.

tripod, in sight of all, was the prize—a chaplet of olive, pine, or parsley leaves. There sat the judge ready to award the prize.

The goal is the end of life, when the race is completed :

“I press on towards the goal” (Phil. iii. 14).

The *prize* for which the young men of Greece underwent this arduous training and the severity of the actual contest, was in itself worthless and soon faded away. But it was the symbol of honour and glory, and no exertion was too great to secure it. How much more worthy of the Christian's most strenuous efforts is the prize held out to stimulate him in his contest! In the Christian race, unlike the Grecian race, there is no competition. “The prize is within the reach of all. But then each runner must be as much in earnest as though there were competition and only one prize.”^a The isthmus of Corinth was the scene every three years of the famous Isthmian games; hence St Paul could appeal with appropriateness and force to the personal experience of the Corinthians :

“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? Even so run that ye may attain. . . . They do it to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible” (1 Cor. ix. 24, 25).

“The prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. iii. 14).

“Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give to me at that day; and not only to me, but also to all them that have loved His appearing” (2 Tim. iv. 8).

^a Howson, “Metaphors,” 151,

The *Judge* in the Christian race, just referred to, has his counterpart, imperfect though the comparison be, in the president of the games. "The games of Asia and Ephesus were pre-eminently famous; and those who held the office of 'Presidents of the Games' were men of high distinction and extensive influence. . . . Men of consular rank were often willing to receive the appointment."^a But there were doubtless unrighteous judges who, from partiality or from spite, might award the prize to another than the victor:

"Let no man rob you of your prize" (Col. ii. 18).

The *joy of the victor* was great. The crown was placed upon his head, and a palm branch in his hand, and, clothed in festive garments, he was led in triumph round the stadium; a herald proclaimed his name and city, the people applauded, poets sang his praises, and he was welcomed home with public festivities, and his name was inscribed in the civic records. This was ample compensation for all the efforts which the athlete had put forth. The Apostle sees in this a picture of his own joy in the success of his finished course. His joy may be ours also.

"My brethren beloved and longed for, my joy and crown" (Phil. iv. 1).

"What is our hope, or joy, or crown of glorying? Are not even ye, before our Lord Jesus at His coming? For ye are our glory and our joy" (1 Thess. ii. 19, 20).

There is one last illustration which may fitly conclude this chapter. The Apostle knew that there were *competitors who failed*—failed either

^a Conybeare and Howson, "Life and Epistles of St Paul," ii. 80.

from not having trained properly, or because they had not striven lawfully in accordance with the rules of the contests. The fear of thus failing must have been a constant motive for watchfulness. St Paul sees in this a solemn warning in regard to the Christian life, and specially for those who are actively engaged in spiritual work for others :

“ I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage ; lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected ” (1 Cor. ix. 27).

“ The image of the pugilist is continued here ; and we have to observe, first, *what* the Apostle does, and, secondly, *why* he does it. He resists his carnal nature, systematically attacks it, and perseveres till he has subdued it ; and this he does under the influence of a salutary fear, lest, whilst he has been made a blessing to others, he himself should fail to obtain the reward. The topic then suggested by this part of the passage might be expressed thus : *persevering effort* inspired by fear.” ^a

CHAPTER VII.

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM SLAVERY.

As our Lord did not disdain to draw lessons from the commonest objects and even objectionable practices, neither did St Paul refrain from employing illustrations drawn from anything which was familiar

^a Howson, “ Metaphors,” 164.

to his readers, even though it was in itself foreign to the spirit of the gospel. Now there was one institution which prevailed in every part of the Apostle's travels, viz., that of slavery. Under the Levitical law the Hebrews were allowed to have slaves, who were mainly those who were unable to discharge their debts except by becoming the bond-servants of those to whom they were indebted. But there were benevolent provisions of the law which rendered the bondage comparatively easy, notably that of release at the end of seven years' service, and the general emancipation which took place every fiftieth year—the year of jubilee. But the whole genius of the Mosaic law was opposed to it, and in time the practice died out. There is no evidence whatever that there were any slaves among the Jews in the time of our Lord. But the Apostle was face to face with the institution in every part of the Roman dominions. In the west of the province of Cilicia, which must have been familiar to "Saul of Tarsus," the natives, as the late Dean Howson states, "found in the progress of the Roman power, for some time, an encouragement rather than a hindrance, for they were actively engaged in an extensive and abominable slave trade, of which the island of Delos was the great market; and the opulent families of Rome were in need of slaves, and were not more scrupulous than some Christian nations of modern times about the means of obtaining them." ^a

The wealthy Romans kept immense numbers of slaves as personal attendants and servants, some

^a Conybeare and Howson, "Life and Epistles of St Paul," i. 22.

even as many as two hundred. Many of these, as we know, were often the trusted friends of their owners ; nevertheless, they had no legal standing, and could not give evidence in a court of law ; they were the property of their masters. Their position may be best described, as Aristotle describes them, as animated instruments needful for life, instruments for the employment of utensils, a portion of their possessor himself, and therefore absolutely belonging to and dependent upon him.

While our Lord and His apostles gave no sanction whatever to slavery, they did not preach an immediate emancipation, which would have produced a universal revolution, and would probably have proved a great hindrance to the progress of the gospel ; they laid down principles which were more powerful than any express command, and have, in fact, led to the universal abolition of slavery.

With this institution in evidence everywhere, St Paul did not hesitate to refer to it in delivering his message. Indeed, allusions to it are to be met with in most of his epistles. As Howson says, this was "almost inevitable for such a writer at this period of history. In the ancient world war and slavery ran into one another, and throughout the Roman Empire the whole of society was made up of contrasts of 'bond' and 'free,' with the freedmen (and such, probably, were St Paul's own ancestors) intermediate between the two. Hence, when speaking of the most momentous alternatives in the condition of the soul, his language is drawn from the experience of slaves." ^a

^a Howson, "Metaphors," 134.

Let us proceed to notice these references.

I. THE BONDAGE OF SLAVERY is regarded from a twofold and apparently opposite point of view, but they are only the two sides of the shield.

It is used to illustrate the state of man as a sinner—the slave of Satan and sin, with all the degrading conditions of such a relation, “tied and bound with the chain of our sin.” Thus we find him writing:—

“Ye were servants (‘bondservants,’ *margin*, R.V.) of sin” (Rom. vi. 17).

“Ye presented your members as servants to uncleanness and to iniquity” (Rom. vi. 19).

But the golden side of the shield is seen in the condition of bondage as illustrating the position of those who own Christ as Lord. “Conscious of the superficial repulsiveness of the metaphor—quite as repulsive in itself to the Pharisee as to the Englishman—he, as it were, apologises for it; not the less carefully in his noble considerateness, because so many of his first readers were actually slaves. He does not lightly go for his picture of our Master’s hold of us to the market of Corinth or of Rome, where men and women were sold and bought to belong as absolutely to their buyers as cattle or as furniture. Yet he does go there, to shake slow perceptions into consciousness, and bring the will face to face with the claim of God.”^a

The word Δοῦλος, translated “servant,” but in the margin of the Revised Version “bondservant,” is frequently employed by St Paul to describe both his own and his convert’s relation to Christ. It

^a Moule, *Expositor’s Bible*, “Romans,” 175.

means "properly the *bond*-man, one in a permanent relation of servitude to another."^a The Apostle had no prouder title than that of "bondservant," and there was no sense of degradation in owning such a master as Christ the Lord. Although he only uses the title which described the owner of slaves — the word *Δεσπότης*, "despot," inferentially of Christ as God (in 2 Tim. ii. 21, "meet for the *master's* use")—yet it is involved in his application of the word *δοῦλος* to the Christian. He felt, as Archbishop Trench says, "It can only be a blessedness for man to regard God as the absolute Lord, Ruler, and Disposer of his life; since with Him power is never disconnected from wisdom and from love."^b

In three of his epistles he describes his own relation to Christ as that of a slave to his master:—

"Paul a servant ('bondservant,' *margin*, R.V.) of Jesus Christ" (Rom. i. 1; Phil. i. 1; Titus i. 1).

And similarly of his converts he writes:—

"Ye become servants ('bondservants') of righteousness . . . servants to God" (Rom. vi. 18, 22).

2. **THE BRANDING OF SLAVES**, in some cases, specially those attached to a particular temple or deity in order to indicate their owners and to afford means of identification, seemed to the Apostle to be reproduced in the scars of the wounds received by him in his Master's service. To these he appealed as manifest proofs of whose he was and whom he served, and thereby at least suggests that every Christian should show in his life and conduct some

^a Trench, "New Testament Synonyms," 29.

^b *Ibid.* 94.

“marks of Jesus,” not indeed, like the *stigmata* of St Francis, yet visible proofs that he is Christ’s slave.

“From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus” (Gal. vi. 17).

This custom of branding, in its hardening the flesh, is also an illustration of the hardening of the conscience :—

“Branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron” (1 Tim. iv. 3).

The great theme of the Apostle, that of salvation, may be expressed in one word, redemption. And as the *idea of redemption* involved that of bondage, the payment of a ransom, and consequent deliverance, there was nothing so effective for his purpose as the thoughts which slavery suggested, especially remembering how familiar his readers were with that institution, many of them actually being slaves.

Let us pass on to the second thought, viz., that of—

3. THE RANSOM OF SLAVES. Slaves could be and were purchased, when they became the absolute property of the purchaser. This finds a parallel in the redemption of sinful man by the sacrifice of Christ, by virtue of which He is both his Liberator and Lord. St Peter speaks of our being redeemed by the precious blood of Christ (1 Pet. i. 18, 19), while our Apostle declares :—

“Ye are not your own ; for ye were bought with a price : glorify God therefore in your body ” (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20).

“Ye were bought with a price ; become not bondservants of men ” (1 Cor. vii. 23).

“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law ” (Gal. iii. 13).

“The church of God, which he purchased with His own blood” (Acts xx. 28).

“In whom we have our redemption through His blood” (Eph. i. 7).

The Apostle presents the results of emancipation in two aspects, viz., grateful service and liberty, each of which was probably within the knowledge of his readers. Even where Christianity was unknown slaves who had pleased their masters were manumitted, while in the Christian Church the acceptance of the gospel made the holding of slaves an inconsistency. In such cases of emancipation we can well conceive of the liberated slave willingly devoting himself, perhaps for life, to his liberator's service. It is also conceivable that slaves might be bought in order to their release, when gratitude would naturally express itself in life-long service. We may think of Onesimus, the runaway slave of Philemon, received back “no longer as a servant, but more than a servant, a brother beloved” (Philem. i. 16), serving his master with willing and profitable service after his return. Such is St Paul's conception of the position of the redeemed Christian. Bishop Moule puts the position thus: “You see your deed of purchase; it is the other side of your warrant of emancipation. . . . Live, suffer, conquer, labour, serve, as men who have themselves walked to their master's door and presented the ear to the awl which pins it to the doorway, each in his turn saying, ‘I will not go out free.’”^a

The sixth chapter of the Romans deals largely

^a Moule, Expositor's Bible, “Romans,” 176.

with this aspect of redemption, a few quotations from which may be given :—

“ Know ye not that to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey ; whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness? But thanks be to God that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered ” (Rom. vi. 16, 17).

“ Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ ” (2 Cor. x. 5).

“ Wast thou called being a bondservant? care not for it : but if thou canst become free, use it rather. For he that was called in the Lord, being a bondservant, is the Lord’s freedman ; likewise he that was called, being free, is Christ’s bondservant ” (1 Cor. vii. 21, 22).

These principles of Christian service were to be carried out even by slaves who had received spiritual freedom :—

“ Servants, be obedient unto them that according to the flesh are your masters . . . not in the way of eyeservice, as menpleasers ; but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart ” (Eph. vi. 5, 6).

4. RELEASE FROM BONDAGE. There is the other aspect of redemption, the blessed fact of *liberty*—liberty from the bondage of sin and the law :—

“ So that thou art no longer a bondservant, but a son ” (Gal. iv. 7).

“ Being made free from sin ” (Rom. vi. 22).

“ The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death ” (Rom. viii. 2).

“ Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty ” (2 Cor. iii. 17).

“With freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage” (Gal. v. 1).

But just as there was the danger of slaves when suddenly manumitted running into riot and excess, so there was present to the mind of the Apostle the fear of Christians in the first joy of their freedom throwing off all restraint and living careless lives. The history of religion has, alas! shown that this fear was not unfounded; and the cry of Madame Roland may be applied to religious as well as to political freedom, “Oh, Liberty, what crimes have been committed in thy name”! Hence St Paul wrote:—

“For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another” (Gal. v. 13).

St Paul delights to dwell on the freedom and blessings of the gospel; but he guards this doctrine from abuse by setting over against it the obligations of Christian service. The believer is both a son and a bondservant, even as the heir to the throne of this country has emblazoned on his coat-of-arms the motto, “*Ich Dien.*”

CHAPTER VIII.

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM DOMESTIC LIFE.

FROM the consideration of St Paul's metaphors drawn from slavery, which was largely a domestic

institution, we may readily pass to other illustrations suggested by domestic life. His own life, as a member of the home at Tarsus in Cilicia, would give him that knowledge of household affairs upon which afterwards he drew when writing his epistles.

I. THE HOUSEHOLD. We know little of the homelife of Saul of Tarsus, but we may be sure that he "was born and spent his earlier days in the shelter of a home which was Hebrew not in name only, but in spirit,"^a his parents being of pure Hebrew blood, and his father also a Pharisee (Acts xxiii. 6 ; Phil. iii. 5). Surrounded by the heathen influences of a Greek population, we can well conceive that special care would be taken to cultivate a religious spirit in the home, and to bring up the son who was intended to be, and eventually became, a Pharisee in the true faith of Israel. It was doubtless the thought of this home of which he was a member that led the Apostle to regard the household as a figure of the Church of God :—

"Ye are . . . of the household of God" (Eph. ii. 19).

"Them that are of the household of the faith" (Gal. vi. 10).

The household, as made up of father, mother, husband and wife, children and servants, is often alluded to as representing spiritual relationships.

Marriage and the mutual love of husband and wife become a symbol of the "great mystery" of the union between Christ and the Church ; and the headship of Christ is represented by the headship of the husband :—

^a Conybeare and Howson, "Life and Epistles of St Paul," i. 44.

“The husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church. . . . Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church. . . . This mystery is great: but I speak in regard of Christ and of the church,” etc. (Eph. v. 23-32).

The giving of a daughter in marriage by the father and his jealousy for her purity are regarded by the Apostle as representing the spiritual relationship between him and the Corinthian Church, of which he was the spiritual father, and of his anxiety for its purity of life :—

“I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ” (2 Cor. xi. 2).

The pangs of child-birth are a symbol of the spiritual anguish of the Apostle who, owing to the relapse of the Galatians, has had to endure over again the keenest spiritual sorrows, until Christ should be again formed in them :—

“My little children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you” (Gal. iv. 19).

2. THE CHILDREN OF THE HOUSEHOLD.

The care of the father for his children, teaching them the truth of God, encouraging them when timid, just pictured the tender care of the Apostle for his converts :—

“Ye know how we dealt with each one of you, as a father with his own children, exhorting you, and encouraging you, and testifying” (1 Thess. ii. 11).

The tenderness of a father in contrast with the severity of the pedagogue who instructed the child is alluded to as indicating the difference between

St Paul's conduct as their spiritual father and the teachers who had come after him in Corinth :—

“ For though ye should have ten thousand tutors in Christ yet have ye not many fathers : for in Christ Jesus I begat you through the gospel ” (1 Cor. iv. 15).

The gentleness of a nursing-mother towards her children further illustrates the Apostle's cherishing love towards the Thessalonians :—

“ We were gentle in the midst of you, as when a nurse cherisheth her own children ” (1 Thes. ii. 7).

The care of the nurse to give her children suitable food—“ milk for babes ”—was another feature in the child's life which the Apostle had imitated :—

“ And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but . . . as unto babes in Christ. I fed you with milk, not with meat ; for ye were not able to bear it ” (1 Cor. iii. 1, 2).

The same illustration meets us in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and may be cited as at least of Pauline use :—

“ Ye are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food. For every one that partaketh of milk is . . . a babe. But solid food is for full-grown men ” (Heb. v. 12-14).

In the same epistle we find an analogy drawn between the father's correction of his children and our heavenly Father's chastening of His sons :—

“ God dealeth with you as with sons ; for what son is there whom his father chasteneth not ? ” (Heb. xiii. 7).

The home life of the boy is illustrated by a reference to the “ pedagogue,” who “ was a sort of nursery governor, a confidential servant in the Greek household, commonly a slave, who had

charge of the boy from his infancy, and was responsible for his oversight. . . . Amongst other offices, his tutor might have to conduct the boy to school; and it has been supposed that Paul is thinking of this duty,"^a as illustrating the office of the Jewish law in educating man for, and leading him on to Christ, when he writes :—

"The law hath been our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor" (Gal. iii. 24, 25).

The same thought underlies the allusion to the condition of a minor who was under the restraint and discipline of his guardian until his minority ended; which the Apostle refers to as illustrating man's position under the law, into which the Galatians had fallen back, losing thereby the freedom and joy of sonship :—

"So long as the heir is a child, he differeth nothing from a bondservant, though he is lord of all; but is under guardians and stewards until the term appointed of the father" (Gal. iv. 1, 2).

One further point of comparison remains to be noticed. St Paul has claimed, as we have seen, the relation of father to the Corinthians; and, as indicating the reason of his refusal of support from them—lest any should say that he desired to make profit out of them—he compares his conduct with that of a father who provides for his children, not they for him :—

"I seek not yours, but you; for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children" (2 Cor. xii. 14).

^a Findlay, Expositor's Bible, "Galatians," 224.

Other lessons from childhood are drawn by the Apostle—something to imitate and something to avoid—as he thinks of the limited capacities and the absence of guile in little children, and on the other hand the growth and development of the mental powers as life advances. These furnish him with illustrations to enforce lessons both for the individual and the Church :—

“ When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child : now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things ” (1 Cor. xiii. 11).

“ Brethren, be not children in mind ; howbeit in malice be ye babes, but in mind be men ” (1 Cor. xiv. 20).

3. THE STEWARD OF THE HOUSEHOLD.

In every large house the supply and distribution of the food was committed to the charge of the steward, the chief servant of the master, an office which demanded faithfulness. As our Lord used this as an illustration (St Matt. xiii. 52 ; xxiv. 45), so also does St Paul when he would set forth the duty and responsibility of the Christian Minister; he is a steward to whom the Master has entrusted the care of sacred things, for the right use of which he is responsible.

“ Let a man so account of us, as of ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Here, moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful ” (1 Cor. iv. 1, 2).

“ For the bishop must be blameless, as God's steward ” (Titus i. 7).

“ I have a stewardship entrusted to me ” (1 Cor. ix. 17).

“ If so be that ye have heard of the dispensation (‘ stewardship,’ *margin.*) of that grace of God which was given me to you-ward ” (Eph. iii. 2).

“The which minister questionings, rather than a dispensation (‘stewardship,’ *marg.*) of God which is in faith” (1 Tim. i. 4.)

CHAPTER IX.

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM CIVIC AND BUSINESS LIFE.

IT has been already pointed out that while St Paul was not uninfluenced by nature, and drew from it and its phenomena images of spiritual truth, his favourite figures were undoubtedly taken from “the busiest human society.”^a This, as we saw, was only what might be expected from one whose life was spent so largely where “men most do congregate.” The Apostle was no recluse, no dweller in the wilderness like the Baptist: for, except the time which he spent in “Arabia” after his conversion (Gal. i. 17), and perhaps his journey through Phrygia and Galatia (Acts xvi. 6), he lived almost continuously in towns and cities. His early life at Tarsus was followed by his sojourn in Jerusalem; and he visited in succession Antioch in Syria, Perga, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Troas, Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome. In some of these places he spent considerable time, and carried on a systematic ministry there; influenced doubtless in doing so by the greater opportunities which these

^a Howson, “Metaphors,” 132.

spheres presented of coming in contact with large numbers of men.

It is, therefore, only what we might expect when we find him laying under contribution the circumstances of life in great cities for illustration of spiritual and moral truths in the letters which he wrote to the Churches which were established there.

We have already noticed how the military life of the Roman Empire, which naturally was most conspicuous in large cities, influenced his thoughts and language. We have now to see how his familiarity with civic and business life also coloured his writings.

I. CITIZENSHIP. St Paul's father was a Roman citizen, a privilege conferred upon him probably "as the reward of services rendered, during the civil wars, to some influential Roman."^a This privilege descended to his son; and it was one which the Apostle valued very highly. When he claimed immunity from the indignity of scourging, on the ground of his Roman citizenship, we can trace the excusable pride of a free-born citizen of the Empire, in the words in which he replied to Lysias about *his* purchased freedom—"But I am a Roman born" (Acts xxii. 28). Another privilege of citizenship he claimed when he appealed to Cæsar—the Roman's right of being tried before his Sovereign; which led to his cherished wish to visit Rome being realised.

St Paul could be individualistic enough when speaking about personal salvation, but he also had a high conception of the believer's position as a

^a Conybeare and Howson, "Life and Epistles of St Paul," i. 50.

member of Christ's kingdom. It was this which led him to regard all who were translated "into the kingdom of the son of His love" (Col. i. 13), under the figure of citizens—

"So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints" (Eph. ii. 19).

"Our citizenship is in heaven" (Phil. iii. 20).

But if the Christian has privileges and a position analogous to those of a citizen, it follows that he also has corresponding duties and responsibilities. "To belong to a . . . great nation is, if rightly viewed, a man's noblest birthright."^a St Paul felt this, and in describing the life he lived, in which he strove to carry out all that is involved in the motto "Noblesse oblige," and in urging his converts to do the same, he employs a word which involves the idea of citizenship—

"I have lived [*as a citizen*] before God in all good conscience until this day" (Acts xxiii. 1).

"Only let your manner of life be worthy ('behave as citizens worthily,' *marg.*) of the gospel of Christ" (Phil. i. 27).

Like an earthly kingdom, the spiritual kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ has its ministers : and St Paul thinks of himself as an Ambassador, entrusted by his sovereign with the proclamation of a treaty of peace, although in carrying it out he was subjected to the greatest indignity which it is conceivable for an ambassador to endure—

"To make known . . . the mystery of the Gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains" (Eph. vi. 19, 20).

"We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as

^a Westcott, "Historic Faith," 125.

though God were intreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. v. 20).

2. **BUSINESS LIFE.** Passing from the affairs of State to those of *Business Life*, we notice that while the Apostle has a contempt of *money* as an object of greed, calling it "filthy lucre" (Titus i. 7, 11), he draws many pictures from the *marketplace*. Thus the familiar text, "Redeeming the time," means, as Dean Howson puts it, "Buy out of the market what you may never buy so cheap again; use the opportunity while you have it, and use it thoroughly."^a It suggests an early visit to the market, and buying up what is offered for sale before others forestall you—

"Redeeming the time" ("buying up the opportunity" *margin*.) (Eph. v. 16; Col. iv. 5).

The honourable loyalty of *paying* every creditor in full is to be the measure of the Christian's service of love to others—

"Owe no man any thing, save to love one another" (Rom. xiii. 8).

In these last words, St Paul shows that "love is to be a perpetual and inexhaustible debt, not as if repudiated or neglected, but as always due and as always paying; a debt, not as a forgotten account is owing to the seller, but as interest on capital is continuously owing to the lender."^b

The position of man as a sinner is illustrated by the terrible bondage of *debt*. Our Lord regards man's unfulfilled obligations to the law as "debts,"

^a Howson, "Metaphors," 133.

^b Moule, Expositor's Bible, "Romans," 358.

for release from which we are to pray (St Matt. vi. 12). And St Paul looks upon man's disobedience to the moral law also as debt ; a debt, the account of which is cleared to the believing man, his faith being "reckoned for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 3), of which Abraham is an example, and he proceeds to say that—

"It was not written for his sake alone, that it was reckoned unto him ; but for our sake also, unto whom it shall be reckoned, who believe on Him," etc. (Rom. iv. 23, 24).

One who was circumcised contracted thereby an obligation to obey the whole law—

"I testify . . . to every man that receiveth circumcision, that he is a debtor to do the whole law" (Gal. v. 3).

Under the metaphor of a *bond*, an undertaking given under the handwriting of one to another, St Paul makes a promise to Philemon in regard to Onesimus—

"But if he hath wronged thee at all, or oweth thee aught, put that to mine account ; I Paul write it with mine own hand, I will repay it" (Philem. 18).

The Law of God is also regarded by the Apostle as a bond, exacting a penalty in default ; but a bond as having been cancelled by Christ—with a possible allusion, as Bishop Pearson points out,^a to some custom of cancelling documents by striking a nail through them—

"Having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us : and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross" (Col. ii. 14, 15).

^a Pearson, "Exposition of the Creed," 373.

The idea of *partnership* is also suggested in the Apostle's reference to some special bond of union or work between himself and Philemon, while he calls Titus by the title of "partner" in respect to the work of collecting money for the poor of Jerusalem in which both had been engaged—

"If then thou countest me a partner, receive him as myself" (Philem. 17).

"Whether any inquire about Titus, he is my partner and my fellow-worker to you-ward" (2 Cor. viii. 23).

The duty of *keeping safe from robbers and foes* the property or money entrusted to a man's care is to be imitated by those to whom has been committed the sacred deposit of divine truth—

"The gospel . . . which was committed to my trust" (1 Tim. i. 11).

"O Timothy, guard that which is committed unto thee" (1 Tim. vi. 20).

In describing the bestowal of the gift of the Holy Spirit as an "earnest" (*arrhabon*), St Paul uses a very remarkable word—almost a technical one—taken from the language of the market—a word probably of Phœnician origin, but adopted by the Greeks, still in use by the Arabs, and traces of which are to be seen in the Scotch "arles-money," and in the French "arrhes." The word means not only a pledge or security given for the due carrying out of a contract: it was also the deposit, or part payment, paid by way of earnest, which made the contract binding, and it was, moreover, a payment in kind of the same nature as the full payment. In other words an "earnest" was both a pledge and a sample; and as such it is a striking figure

of the Holy Spirit, given now as an anticipation and promise of the future—^a

“Who also sealed us, and gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts” (2 Cor. i. 22).

“Ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God’s own possession” (Eph. i. 13, 14).

The work of the Christian minister is to be of such a character that, when tested, it will be seen to have been handled rightly, not deviating from the straight line of orthodoxy—like that of the workman who has to lay out a road or drive a furrow—

“Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth” (2 Tim. ii. 15).

CHAPTER X.

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM JEWISH AND ROMAN LAW.

ST PAUL had the advantage of being familiar with both Jewish and Roman law. As a “Pharisee of the Pharisees” he was brought up, as he tells us, in Jerusalem, “at the feet of Gamaliel, instructed according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers” (Acts xxii. 3). Gamaliel has been described as “the most eminent ornament of the school of Hillel, whose fame is celebrated in the Talmud.” Although he was a Pharisee, “he was not trammelled by the narrow bigotry of the sect.” His teaching and example may be supposed to have

^a Bardsley, “Illustrative Texts,” 222-227.

produced on the mind of St Paul "candour and honesty of judgment, a willingness to study and make use of Greek authors, and a keen and watchful enthusiasm for the Jewish law." ^a Thus he would be led before his conversion to be a strict observer of all the requirements of that law, and all through his career to have a sincere regard for it as the expression of God's will for that preparatory dispensation.

But the future Apostle had also the advantage of being acquainted with Roman Law. Some writers think that he may have received a Roman legal education in the schools of Tarsus, which rivalled those of Athens and Alexandria. Whatever may have been his knowledge of Greek literature, we have proofs that he had at least sufficient acquaintance with Roman law to qualify him to act as a Roman citizen.

We may now proceed to examine the illustrations which he drew from both Jewish and Roman law.

I. THE PLACE OF THE MOSAIC LAW.
After his conversion, Saul "went away into Arabia" (Gal. i. 17), where, under the shadow, as it were, of Sinai, he learnt the lesson of the impossibility of being justified by obedience to the requirements of that law; and the further lesson of the true place of this law in preparing the way for the coming Redeemer: that "it was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come": that its purpose was to reveal man's need, and so lead him on to the Saviour. He illustrates this by a reference

^a Conybeare and Howson, "Life and Epistles of St Paul," vol. i. 61-63.

to the duty of the pedagogue in conducting the child to school, already quoted in regard to child life.

“The law hath been our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor” (Gal. iii. 24, 25).

2. HEIRSHIP AND ADOPTION. The same truth is also illustrated by the analogy of the heir, in which St Paul appears to draw upon what was common to both Jewish and Roman law, although some writers think that the illustration does not hold good in all particulars. But, as Prof. Findlay points out, “The essential particulars involved in it are, first, the childishness of the infant heir ; secondly, the subordinate position in which he is placed for the time ; and thirdly, the right of the father to determine the expiry of his infancy.”^a The Jewish people were the heirs of God ; but they were in their nonage. When Christ came, and when men believed in Him, whether Jews or Gentiles, they entered on the enjoyment of their spiritual inheritance.

But this illustration does not sufficiently set forth the place of those outside the covenant ; and therefore the Apostle proceeds to add another illustration from Roman law to explain how they come in ; viz., that of adoption.

“So long as the heir is a child, he differeth nothing from a bondservant, though he is lord of all ; but is under guardians and stewards until the term appointed of the father. So we also, when we were children, were held in bondage under the rudiments of the world” (Gal. iv. 1-3).

^a Findlay, Expositor's Bible, “Galatians,” 265.

He is here referring to what his readers in Rome and in the Province of Galatia would be familiar with, and the fact that the Apostle only employs this metaphor in his letters to Churches in which the Jewish element was limited, or non-existent, shows that it was to Roman and Greek custom that he was alluding, not Jewish practices. There was both a private and a public adoption among the Romans; the first, sometimes involved purchase, if the one to be adopted was not already the slave of his putative father; the second, the public acknowledgment of the act—when the adopted son entered on the enjoyment of his privileges—such as being called by the adoptive father's name, addressing him by the endearing title of "Abba" or father; and having property conferred upon him. All these points find allusion in the following references—

"That He might redeem them which were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 5, 6).

"Ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom. viii. 15).

"Having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto Himself" (Eph. i. 5).

"Waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Rom. viii. 23).

3. MARRIAGE. The Apostle has referred to slavery as illustrating the Christian's relation to Christ as Master, whom it is his delight to serve—already alluded to in the chapter on "Slavery." He also draws illustrations from the relationship of marriage, some of which were noted in the chapter on "Domestic Life." But the legal aspect

of that relationship also appeals to him. Both the Mosaic and Gentile law laid claim to a life-long obedience ; only death could release from its obligations. This is shown by the marriage bond, which is dissolved only on the death of one of the parties. Similarly, the Christian's death with Christ releases him from the dominion of the Law of works. But as the woman whose husband is dead is free to marry again, so the believer is united by faith to the Divine Husband, in order to bring forth the fruit of holiness. "In the illustration, the husband dies, the woman lives and weds again. In the application, the Law does not die, but we, its unfaithful bride, are 'done to death to it,' and then, strange sequel, are wedded to the Risen Christ. . . . Shall we call all this a simile confused? Not if we recognize the deliberate and explicit carefulness of the whole passage. . . . The Law cannot die, for it is the prescriptive will of God. Its claim is, in its own awful *forum domesticum*, like the injured Roman husband, to sentence its own unfaithful wife to death. And so it does ; so it has done. But behold, its Maker and Master steps upon the scene. He surrounds the guilty one with Himself, takes her whole burthen on Himself, and meets and exhausts her doom. He dies. He lives again, after death, because of death. . . . He rises, clasping in His arms her for whom He died . . . for His blessed Bride." ^a

"The woman that hath a husband is bound by law to the husband while he liveth ; but if the husband die, she is discharged from the law of the husband. . . . Wherefore

^a Moule, Expositor's Bible, "Romans," 182.

. . . ye also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ ; that ye should be joined to another, even to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God" (Rom. vii. 2-4).

4. WILLS. When St Paul is asserting the permanence of the ancient covenant which God made with Abraham—a covenant ratified by His own pledged word—which promised blessings to the whole world in Christ, the "heir of the Promise," a covenant which the Law did not and could not abrogate, he illustrates it by alluding to a man's will or testament—

"Brethren, I speak after the manner of men : though it be but a man's covenant ('testament'—*marg.*), yet when it hath been confirmed, no one maketh it void, or addeth thereto. . . . Now . . . a covenant confirmed beforehand by God, the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after, doth not disannul, so as to make the promise of none effect" (Gal. iii. 15-17).

In reference to this word "covenant," Professor Findlay remarks, "The presumption is that the word is employed in its accepted everyday significance. And that unquestionably was 'testament.' It would never occur to an ordinary Greek reader to interpret the expression otherwise. . . . Now, a 'covenant of promise' amounts to a 'testament.' It is the *prospective* nature of the covenant, the bond which it creates between Abraham and the Gentiles, which the Apostle has been insisting on. It invests those taking part in it with 'sonship' and rights of 'inheritance.' These ideas cluster round the thought of a *testament* ; they are not inherent in *covenant*, strictly considered. Even in the Old Testament

this latter designation fails to convey all that belongs to the Divine engagements there recorded. In a covenant the two parties are conceived as equals in point of law, binding themselves by a compact that bears on each alike. Here it is not so."^a

We have, apparently, the same reference to a will in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the delay in entrance upon the "eternal inheritance," for which the heirs waited until the death of Christ, is compared to a possession bequeathed by will, which is not enjoyed until the death of the testator—

"For where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it. For a testament is of force where there hath been death: for doth it ever avail while he that made it liveth?" (Heb. ix. 16, 17).

CHAPTER XI.

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM CLASSICAL LITERATURE.

WITHOUT entering into a discussion of the extent of St Paul's classical knowledge, it may suffice to recall the dictum of Doctor Bently, in his Boyle lectures, on the one side, "that St Paul was a great master in all the learning of the Greeks"; and on the other side the assertion of Dean Farrar, that "nothing can be more clear than that he had never been subjected to a classic training."^b Probably the truth lies midway between these directly opposite opinions, and that Saul, when he went to

^a Findlay, *Expositor's Bible*, "Galatians," 199, 200.

^b Farrar, *Life and Work of St Paul*, ch. ii.

school at Tarsus, learned something more than the commonplaces of classical knowledge which, without being very deep, yet in after life influenced his mind and found expression in his words. All that we propose to do here is to specify the allusions to classical writers which we find him making by way of illustration.

1. In his address to the Stoics and Epicureans of Athens, with whose tenets he appears to have been familiar, he illustrates what he has said about the immanence of God, and of man's dependence upon Him for physical, sentient, and intellectual life, by a quotation from the "Phœnomena" of Aratus, a Greek poet of his own province of Cilicia, but found also in other poets—

"As certain even of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring" (Acts xvii. 28).

2. To force home the lesson that association with evil may affect the moral character of those exposed to it, he refers to a proverb found in "Thais," a lost play of Menander—

"Evil company doth corrupt good manners" (1 Cor. xv. 33).

3. When writing to Titus in Crete, and reproving the loose moral teaching and conduct of the Cretans, he supports his condemnation of them by reference to the judgment of their own prophet-poet Epimenides—

"One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, idle gluttons" (Titus i. 12).

4. To these quotations may be added the illustration which the Apostle gives of the oneness

of the human body, combined with the individuality of each member, as a picture of the Christian Church. Here, at least, he approaches the fable of Livy—which Shakespeare has made familiar^a—in which Menenius Agrippa stills sedition in Rome by picturing the various members of the body refusing to work on the ground that all the food went to one member, and proceeding to show how the sustenance went to nourish all the members. There society is regarded as an organism similar to the human body, in which each member contributes to the good of the whole. It is not improbable that St. Paul had this in mind when he applies the same figure to the Christian Church—

“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. . . . For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; it is not therefore not of the body. . . .”
(1 Cor. xii. 12-27).

CHAPTER XII.

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE.

LIKE Timothy, St Paul “from a babe had known the sacred writings” (2 Tim. iii. 15); and in all his speeches and letters shows his intimate acquaintance with them. Only the briefest catalogue of, and comment on, those to which he refers by way of illustration is possible here. We may take them

^a Shakespeare, “Coriolanus,” Act I., sc. i.

in the order of their occurrence in the Old Testament.

The creation of Light illustrates the entrance of divine truth into the heart—

“Seeing it is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, Who shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God” (2 Cor. iv. 6).

Adam’s formation before that of Eve, and the latter’s readiness to listen to temptation, suggest to the Apostle the subjection of woman to man—

“For Adam was first formed, then Eve; and Adam was not beguiled, but the woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression” (1 Tim. ii. 13, 14).

The craftiness of the serpent in tempting Eve is analogous to the Devil’s method now—

“Lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted” (2 Cor. xi. 3).

Abraham is the great example of righteousness by faith—

“Even as Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness” (Gal. iii. 6). (See also Rom. iv.)

The story of Abraham’s children, Ishmael and Isaac, is an “allegory” of the difference between the legal and the Christian state, Hagar being the typical mother of the worldly and Sarah of the spiritual, representing the two covenants. Ishmael becomes the representative of the law, proceeding from Sinai, and is an example of those who clung to the law of Moses in the Christian Church, “Jerusalem that now is.” While Isaac, the son of Promise, by Sarah, represents the Gospel, “Jerusalem that is above”—

“Abraham had two sons, one by the handmaid, and one by the freewoman. . . . These women are two covenants; one from Mount Sinai, . . . Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. . . .” (Gal. iv. 22-31).

The choice of Isaac and of Jacob illustrate the profound mystery of God's electing love—

“In Isaac shall thy seed be called. . . . Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated ” (Rom. ix. 7-13).

Pharaoh is instanced as an example of God's sovereign choice—

“For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, For this very purpose did I raise thee up, that I might show in thee my power ” (Rom. ix. 17).

An episode in the history of Moses is referred to as illustrating the Christian's full knowledge of God's revelation in contrast with the blindness which hindered the Jews from knowing all—a blindness which still continued but would one day pass away—which he finds symbolised by his putting on a veil—

“We . . . are not as Moses, who put a veil upon his face . . . which veil is done away in Christ. But unto this day, whensoever Moses is read, a veil lieth upon their heart. But whensoever it shall turn to the Lord, the veil is taken away ” (2 Cor. iii. 12-16).

The typical character of the Exodus finds many illustrations.

Two of the magicians who opposed Moses are named as typical opponents of the truth—

“Like as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also withstand the truth ” (2 Tim. iii. 7).

The Passover is a type of Christ—

“For our Passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ ” (1 Cor. v. 7).

The passage through the Red Sea, the gift of manna, and the provision of water, were sacramental types of the spiritual provision made for us in the Gospel.

“Our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink. . . . These things were our examples” (1 Cor. x. 1-6).

The singular fact that, whatever the amount of manna gathered by each, all had sufficient, but no more than was sufficient, for their needs, is appealed to as a motive to unselfish liberality and the practice of true Christian Socialism—

“That there may be equality; as it is written, he that gathered much had nothing over; and he that gathered little had no lack” (2 Cor. viii. 15).

But to show that not all who partake of God’s provision necessarily find entrance into the Promised Land of heaven, he cites the case of Israel—

“Howbeit with most of them God was not well pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted” (1 Cor. x. 5, 6).

Their idolatry, lustfulness, tempting God, and murmuring are cited as warnings—

“Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they are written for our admonition” (1 Cor. x. 11).

The difference between the old and new dispensations is illustrated by the contrast presented by the one being engraved on stone, the latter on the conscience and heart—

"Not in tables of stone, but in tables that are hearts of flesh" (2 Cor. iii. 3).

In the ceremony of the presentation of the first-fruits, the first sheaf of the new harvest, at the Feast of the Passover, which represented the rest of the corn, the Apostle sees a striking picture of our Lord's Resurrection as a pledge of His people's resurrection hereafter—

"But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the first fruits of them that are asleep. . . . In Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits; then they that are Christ's, at His coming" (1 Cor. xv. 20-23).

The temporary character of the Tabernacle, compared with the permanency of the Temple, seems to underlie the contrast contained in the words—

"We know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens" (2 Cor. v. 1).

The duty of supporting the ministry is enforced by allusion to the practice of the priests having a share of the offerings—

"Know ye not that they which minister about sacred things eat of the things of the temple, and they which wait upon the altar have their portion with the altar? Even so did the Lord ordain that they which proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel" (1 Cor. ix. 13, 14).

But the partaking of the sacrifices conveyed another lesson, that of identification thereby with the altar, which is pressed upon the Corinthians who joined in heathen feasts—

“Behold Israel after the flesh: have not they which eat the sacrifices communion with the altar?” (1 Cor. x. 18).

One further illustration, drawn from the story of Elijah’s life, is brought in to prove that God, even in the darkest days, has a “remnant of grace”—

“Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elijah? how he pleadeth with God against Israel. . . . But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have left for Myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to Baal” (Rom. xi. 2-4).

CHAPTER XIII.

MISCELLANEOUS ILLUSTRATIONS.

I. THE HUMAN BODY. St Paul had no contempt for the body. It is true that he recognised and felt the power of its desires, and the need to “keep under his body”; but he deprecated the false asceticism in regard to it which some in Colossæ practised (Col. ii. 23), while he dignified it when he asserted that “the body is for the Lord,” and that it is a “temple of the Holy Ghost” (1 Cor. vi. 19).

As a living organism, he regards it as a symbol of the vital unity of the Christian Church. As the various members of the body are dependent upon the head, so individual believers are “members of Christ,” joined together in one body, all deriving life and power from the Head, even Christ—

“And gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body” (Eph. i. 22).

“There is one body” (Eph. iv. 4).

“He is the head of the body, the church” (Col. i. 18).

The mutual relation, interdependence and common interests of the various organs of the human body, find a close parallel in the Body of Christ—

“The body is not one member, but many . . . Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof” (1 Cor. xii. 14-27).

“For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office : so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another” (Rom. xii. 4, 5).

“We are members one of another” (Eph. iv. 25).

The corporate life and growth of the Church is illustrated by the body of man, with its joints all united together by ligatures and muscles, and receiving its impulses from the head. So the Lord is the Head from Whom spiritual life flows into all His members, the various organs contributing to the perfection of the whole—

“The head, even Christ ; from Whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love” (Eph. iv. 15, 16).

“The head, from whom all the body, being supplied and knit together through the joints and bands, increaseth with the increase of God” (Col. ii. 19).

Diseases of the body also find a slight reference. Thus gangrene, which poisons the whole frame

and soon becomes fatal, is the symbol of false doctrines which eat the heart out of the Christian Faith—

“Their word will eat as doth a gangrene” (2 Tim. ii. 17).

Mortification, or putting to death, is the strong figure which the Apostle employs to indicate how the Christian is to kill sin within him.

“If by the spirit ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Rom. viii. 13).

“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth” (Col. iii. 5).

Blindness is a metaphor of insensibility to the light of the Gospel.

“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel . . . should not dawn upon them” (2 Cor. iv. 4).

(It may be noted that where the word “blinded” or “blindness” is found in the A.V. in Rom. xi. 7, 25, 2 Cor. iii. 14, and Eph. iv. 18, the R.V. has “hardened” or “hardening,” the original word meaning the hardening of the flesh by the formation of chalkstones, and not defect of vision.)

The figure of sleep, suggested by the metaphor of the night, or darkness, is employed to indicate both those living in sin and also those who live in a state of disregard to the second coming of our Lord—

“So let us not sleep, as do the rest, . . . for they that sleep sleep in the night” (1 Thess. v. 6, 7).

“Awake, thou that sleepest” (Eph. v. 14).

“Now it is high time for you to awake out of sleep” (Rom. xiii. 11).

2. NAUTICAL ILLUSTRATIONS. As a frequent traveller on the sea, and as having thrice suffered shipwreck (even before the last occasion on his way to Rome), in having experienced "perils in the sea" (2 Cor. xi. 25, 26), he could well speak of nautical matters from personal knowledge.

Instability of religious character under opposing influences is illustrated by the figure of a ship tossed about and carried hither and thither by gusts of wind from different quarters—

"That we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Eph. iv. 14).

With this we may compare the metaphor in the Epistle to the Hebrews of a ship carried along by the force of the current and drifting helplessly with the tide away from a safe anchorage; and that of the anchor which holds the vessel fast and enables it to outride the storm; as indicating both the danger and the security of the Christian when exposed to the waves of persecution or trouble—

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them" (Heb. ii. 1).

"Which we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and stedfast and entering into that which is within the veil" (Heb. vi. 19).

The vessel with its cargo tossed overboard, and in consequence pitched about like a cork by the waves, and finally wrecked, is a picture of those who throw over the fundamental verities of the faith—

“Holding faith and a good conscience; which some having thrust from them made shipwreck concerning the faith” (1 Tim. i. 19).

3. **MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.** While St Paul speaks of “singing and making melody with the heart,” there is no evidence in his writings that he was a musical man. Yet he refers to a few musical instruments by way of illustration. The trumpet has been already referred to when treating of warfare (Chapter V.), but in connexion with that passage we find other instruments mentioned to illustrate the superiority of “prophesying” over the gift of “tongues,” showing the uselessness of mere sounds, each instrument having its own sound and giving a distinction in the notes it gives forth—

“Even things without life, giving a voice, whether pipe or harp, if they give not a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain voice, who shall prepare himself for war?” (1 Cor. xiv. 7, 8).

The Cymbal, an instrument only of percussion, producing a loud harsh sound, without any definite tune, is a metaphor of one who has the power of speaking all languages, even that of the angels, but who has no love in his heart—

“If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal” (1 Cor. xiii. 1).

4. **THE POTTER.** To illustrate God’s sovereign power over His creatures and the folly of man in calling it in question, he goes to the Old Testament imagery of the potter and the clay (see Isa. lxiv. 8; Jer. xviii. 6)—

“Hath not the potter a right over the clay, from the same lump to make one part a vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?” (Rom. ix. 21).

The mixed character of the members of the visible Church is illustrated by the variety of the domestic vessels of the house, some of them being the fragile earthenware pots made by the potter; and these again, in reference to the practice of storing up treasures of gold and silver in them, are alluded to as indicating the weakness of the human nature which is entrusted with the priceless treasure of the gospel, a disparity which is intended to show that the whole power and glory is God's—

“In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some unto honour, and some unto dishonour” (2 Tim. ii. 20).

“We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God” (2 Cor. iv. 7).

6. The work of the *Refiner and Assayer*, in testing by fire and so separating the good metal from the dross, is taken to illustrate God's dealing with his people by way of trial, in order to make them pure. The word implies the expectation of this result; for, as Trench says, “It is ever so with the proofs to which He Who sits as a Refiner in His Church submits His own: His intentions in these being ever, not indeed to find His saints pure gold (for that he knows they are not), but to make them such.”^a

“The fire itself shall prove each man's work of what sort it is” (1 Cor. iii. 13).

^a Trench, “Synonyms of New Testament,” p. 266.

“ But even as we have been approved of God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak ” (1 Thess. ii. 4).

It is also the image of personal testing ; while those who do not stand the test are like the base metal, rejected on trial—

“ Let a man prove himself ” (1 Cor. xi. 28).

“ But let each man prove his own work ” (Gal. vi. 4).

“ That ye may approve the things that are excellent ” (Phil. i. 10).

“ Prove all things ” (1 Thess. v. 21).

“ Prove your own selves. Or know ye not as to your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you? unless indeed ye be reprobate ” (2 Cor. xiii. 5).

“ Reprobate concerning the faith ” (2 Tim. iii. 8).

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